

THE INCULTURATION OF CHRISTIANITY IN GHANA: A CASE STUDY ON  
BOMPATA

A Report of a Senior Study

by

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## ABSTRACT

European missionaries have been evangelizing since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Basel missionaries were incognizant of their culture embedded within the Christian teachings they were implanting in Bompata, Ghana. Inculturation provides both the church and the indigenous culture the opportunity for open dialogue. Over the last 125 years the Presbyterian Church of Bompata has been in conversation with the local culture, therefore not only has the culture been transformed but the church itself has been altered. The first chapter of this study will examine the context and anthropological theory of my field work. The second chapter will provide historical background for the community of Bompata, Rameseyer Presbyterian Church, and the Reverend Twum-Barimah. The third chapter defines the theory of inculturation. The final chapter examines a particular historical moment in Bompata to see how Christianity has evolved and impacted the local culture. My study finds that some aspects such as healing and witchcraft were inculturated, while others such as ancestral worship and libations were labeled “heathen” from the onset and never given the opportunity to be in dialogue with Christianity. Education, protestant work ethic, and salems have greatly affected the social structure and culture of the community of Bompata.



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## CHAPTER I

### CONTEXT OF STUDY

#### Background and Connection to Maryville College

As I exited the plane, I approached the worn *akwaaba* (welcome) sign and all of the familiar smells and sounds of Ghana flooded in. The once scary unfamiliar sights now elicited welcoming exciting memories. “Madam we take any currency.” “Please can I help you” “White lady are you looking for the Tulip Hotel!” “Madam, please, taxi?” These once overwhelming pleas were now easy for me to manage. I simply responded, “*Mepaakyew, eye* which means “please, I am fine” in Twi to the countless offers and pleas, while I waited for my friends to arrive.

Then, in the summer of 2009, I was returning to Ghana to live with the Twum-Barimah family through an exchange program with Maryville College. The previous fall, I had studied Religion and Political Science at the University of Ghana, Legon. While there, I also learned rudimentary Twi at the University and was introduced to the Ghanaian culture. Upon my return in 2009, I stayed in the Ashanti<sup>1</sup> region in the village of Bompata near Ansankare.

My host family, the Twum-Barimahs, have maintained an ongoing connection to Maryville College. The Twum-Barimah’s son, Frank Twum-Barimah, attended

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<sup>1</sup> The Ashanti region will be addressed later in the paper.



Maryville College in 2000. A pastor friend of the family, George Carpenter, from North Carolina, had partnered with his church to bring Frank to the United States. From Frank's attendance at Maryville College the relationship to the village began. The Reverend and Mrs. Twum-Barimah, along with their youngest son Kofi, were invited to attend Frank's graduation. Reverend Twum-Barimah gave the Baccalaureate address in May 2004 and extended an open invitation to their home in Ghana. Over the years, many students and staff of Maryville College have accepted this invitation and have had the opportunity to experience Ghana. Through these trips relationships and partnerships have been built. Maryville students in 2005 raised money to install a bore-well which provides clean water to the Bompata Presbyterian Secondary School and to the village. Books as well as sports balls have been provided to the local schools. Most recently, a J-term class supplied the secondary school with text books and five computers. They have also promised to sponsor fourteen students through their secondary school education.

Throughout the village of Bompata the name Maryville College was well known. Routinely, my first introduction to members of the village would consist of a polite hand shake and acknowledgment of my name. However, when my association with Maryville College was revealed these seemingly reserved greetings turned into friendly and ecstatic exchanges over the gratitude and warmth felt towards the contributions of Maryville College. Maryville College's prestigious reputation in the village was automatically transferred to my presence. It allowed people to immediately place me in a category based on previous interactions with members of the Maryville College community. My association to Maryville College provided me a role in their community, but it may also have impacted the results of my research. The community already held preconceived

notions of Maryville College students. Both the positive and negative attributes would be transferred to me and therefore to some extent dictate the results of my research. The answers to the many questions I would ask were possibly skewed to conform to the answers my subjects perceived I was trying to obtain.

### Introduction

I first arrived in Accra and stayed a few days with my friend Abraham Dsane's family. This provided me with time to readjust to Ghanaian culture before joining the Twum-Barimah family. I was sent for upon the arrival of the Twum-Barimah's son, Frank. The Twum-Barimahs and I spent the night at the Anyamesem's house where I was politely offered some *fufu*, a traditional Ghanaian dish, and to everyone's amazement was able to consume my portion with ease. This would be the first of many instances in which my prior knowledge of Ghanaian culture distinguished me from the other *obrunies* (which literally means "foreigner from across the sea" and is commonly associated with white foreigners) but made it difficult for those I was staying with to know how to treat me. The following morning we traveled to Bompata which would be my home for the next two months.

I spent the first week feeling out the new state of my affairs. *Twɔ* is the predominate language in the village and the villagers had less exposure to foreigners. The Twum-Barimahs, on the other hand, were used to catering to *obrunies*. I was somewhere in between. I had lived in Ghana for five months but was still an outsider. Similar to Ann Grodzins Gold's experience in Ghatiyali, India, the Ghanaians would see me through the colored lenses of those who had previously stayed in the village (Gold 12). Gold was immediately accepted because of Joseph Miller's previous work in the

village, but she was always being contrasted with him (Gold 12). I felt a similar pressure to conform and live up to the legacies of previous house guests of the Twum-Barimahs. The previous guests allowed for me to have immediate access to the community but I found myself frequently being compared to previous guests. I was also in constant comparison to Frank. There were continuous indigenous conversations about the degree of my Ghanaianess. Mama Twum-Barimah would always make comments to Frank that I was more Ghana than him. These comments usually ensued after Frank fell ill after eating Ghanaian food while I was fine. The villagers also engaged in these comparisons, comparing me to past guests or foreign characters they had seen in films.

The linguistic diglossia of urban and village Twi was present in Ghana. For the people of Bompata, Twi is their vernacular language. For most people living in the city of Accra, Ga is their first language, followed by English, and then Twi. This linguistic diversity in the city results in a less “pure” form of Twi along with the incorporation of more slang. The villagers were impressed with my rudimentary Twi greetings, but most of my city vocabulary was rendered useless. For the majority of my stay I was surrounded by conversations in Twi which I could not understand and so I was directly addressed in English. My linguistic limitations were an impediment to my participant-observation in this community. My new environment had to be mediated to me. The Twum-Barimah’s two year-old granddaughter, Nana Joyce, with whom I resided, provided me with most of my village vocabulary.

All church services were presided over in Twi, but classes at the local school were taught in English (although the teachers regularly translated their lessons into Twi). Paul Rabinow articulates the struggles that accompany a language barrier (Rabinow 64). He

reminisces about a visit to a friend's family in a Moroccan village, and writes "we chatted a bit and she referred to me as the *moul-taxi* owner, or chief of the taxi-quite appropriately, I thought. My feeble Arabic was greeted with warm but hearty laughter, which effectively discouraged much discussion on my part. Most of the time, in any case, they spoke Berber" (64). Like similar situations I found myself in, Rabinow's language barrier encouraged him to retreat from conversations. The family he was with reverted back to their vernacular language, which was Berber. Many times when conversations did not directly pertain to me the dialogue would switch back to the vernacular Twi. My knowledge of the Ashanti language was limited and therefore prevented me from participating in conversations. As a result, I spent a great deal of time sitting quietly and self-consciously, unable to grasp the context of the conversation. Speaking fluent Twi would have allowed me to gain access to a different group of people in Bompata. I was unable to build direct relationships with non-English speakers, and therefore all of my interviews and experiences with this population were mediated through other members of Ghanaian society. I would have been more qualified to understand the context and culture of the people of Bompata if I was able to communicate in their vernacular language.

My host family immediately accepted me as their daughter. I was included in on all of Frank's homecoming activities. Frank, who had not been back to Ghana for 6 years and had been residing in the United States for 10 years, was received with much celebration. Everything was "Frank and Nicole's welcome home party" or "Frank and Nicole's goat." My inclusion may have deluded the village into believing that Frank had brought me home as his bride by the simple fact that he was clearly of age and had not

been home for six years. Typically, siblings get married in order and Ernest, the second oldest brother, had already eloped, therefore, the villages thought, surely Frank had found someone. The two favorite topics of conversation revolved around when Frank was getting married and if he could spare some money. These misconceived notions made for very awkward introductions: either aunts were thrilled that there were going to be light-complexioned children in the family or upset that Frank was marrying outside of Ghana. After much reassurance that I was only visiting from Maryville College, had come to teach, and that I had just met Frank a few days ago, I was acknowledged individually. People began to speak to me directly, rather than through the mediation of Frank.

Because Frank and I were the guests, meals revolved around our American schedule and bottled water and soda were provided. It took some convincing to be permitted to drink the local sachet waters to which I had grown accustomed in the city. Bottled water cost 130 percent more than sachet water and the bottled water would set me apart. I wanted to align myself as an “insider” and did not want to cause the Twum-Barimahs any added expense. I went to school in the morning after I had taken breakfast and then returned for lunch, therefore only completing half a day. This limited the connections that I had with fellow teachers and students. I was clearly the outsider and did not even have to complete the entire work day. This special treatment slowed my assimilation into the village.

As a woman, I was addressed through Frank. I was unable to have unmediated conversation or interactions with the people of Bompata. It was not until a month into my stay when Frank left that I was able to realize the barrier which had been in place. When Frank left Bompata acquaintances asked where the *asafoba* (pastor’s son) was and

how I was managing without him. I had not quite noticed that I was not being directly addressed until Frank's absence. I was also unaware of the fact that the household revolved solely around our needs. Upon Frank's departure, life in the Twum-Barimah's home returned to some sort of normalcy. Meals returned to regular Ghanaian times and the school day was finished before lunch was served. My position was beginning to move towards an increased "insider" status. I was better received by my fellow teachers and able to begin to make connections with my students. I was permitted into the social group of the women who worked in the Twum-Barimah's home. I was beginning to be allowed into the world of the women. This is where I heard all the gossip about the family and frequent visitors. When Frank left, a barrier separating me from the women was removed.

I initially earned my entrée into the town of Bompata through my association with Maryville College. My status was further supplemented through my possible romantic relationship to Frank. From these two associations, the people of Bompata assigned me my initial position in the community. I was placed on a continuum from "*obruni*" ("outsider") to "native" ("insider"). When I first arrived I was a little further along the spectrum than most guests because of my previous experience in Ghana. Frank helped to push me along, but he also generated a line which I could not cross until his departure. As time passed, I was able to move and negotiate a position closer to "native" end of the spectrum, but I would always remain part "*obruni*." As my status moved closer to "native" my participant observation was more successful.

According to Rabinow, the most difficult task facing an anthropologist is "finding, cultivating, and changing informants" in a small village (Rabinow 92). No

neutral role exists for an anthropologist (92). I was originally a guest of the Twum-Barimah's from Maryville College under the care of Mama Twum-Barimah. I was forced to face this reality once my social position changed because Frank left. I became relieved of the role of guest and began to occupy the role of guest teacher and honorary member of the community. I was welcomed into homes and began making connections, but my association to the Twum-Barimahs was always blatantly present. The Twum-Barimah's would always be my primary key informants.

Shortly after Frank returned to the United States I began my interviews. I had spent a month getting to know the people and orientating myself in the town. The process of acquainting myself with the community had given me greater insights into developing an interview schedule. I knew more historical and cultural background which allowed me to articulate my questions into indigenous categories. These categories were easier for the interviewees to comprehend and relate to. I pitched my project proposal to Mama and Papa Twum-Barimah and they helped to align and connect me with key community members. They had access to almost all of the social groups in Bompata. Papa is a respected community member in and outside of the church. Mama was the one to take me on interviews and ensure that my project work was completed.

#### Context and Circumstances

All of the research I conducted is based on my position as a white American woman. My gender, economic status, social location, and nationality play a role in how I interpret the data collected. According to Rabinow, we can pretend that we are neutral scientists that are collecting data but truly we would only be fooling ourselves (Rabinow 152). Anthropologists must realize that their research results are cross-cultural because

they take place across cultural boundaries. A peoples' lived experience is converted into facts through the anthropologists questioning, observing, and experiencing (152). The anthropologist attempts to convert a lived experience into western categories of objective knowledge. Informants have to be self-conscious about their own culture and be able to objectify their world-view (152). This includes verbal and embodied non-verbal articulation. The information presented to the anthropologist is in a mode of externality because the anthropologist is outside of "textual" context for understanding even the most elemental things (152). The informant is forced to become self-reflective, self-reflexive, and self-conscious about aspects of his life that had once been taken for granted in order to present his or her view to an outsider of the culture (152). Even once the informant is able to comprehend what the outsider is asking, he or she must be able to articulate it in a way the researcher can understand. This process results in a cross-cultural product (152-153).

Both the anthropologist and the informant have been enculturated with a set of symbols based on their social upbringing. To conduct research a shared set of symbols must be constructed in order for the informant and anthropologist to objectify information. This construction of shared symbols is particularly relevant at the beginning of an anthropologist's study (153). It was difficult for me to structure and convey the cultural phenomenon I was trying to understand with little background in the history and culture of Bompata. The relationship to the information continues to be one of externality for both the anthropologist and the informants (153). Informants must give external accounts of their own experiences relevant to the questions presented by the



anthropologist and they must do this to the best of their ability based on the questions presented (153). This therefore is an interpersonal interaction (153).

What I had not realized until I returned to Ghana was that much of the work of an anthropologist does not come from the questions formally presented but rather through the process of living with the community and participating in their day-to-day activities. I began to pick up cultural and contextual cues, both verbal and non-verbal overtime. The inabilities of the researcher are on public display according to Rabinow (154). I found this to be particularly true when interviewing. Certain questions like whether libations were practiced solicited laughs from the community members I was interviewing at the time. I found this to be frustrating and uncomfortable at times but working through this discomfort, I was able to grow and discover new aspects of the culture. Rabinow also asserts, “Fieldwork, then, is a process of inter subjective construction of liminal modes of communication” (155). He is referring to the fact that multiple subjects are not grounded in a common set of assumptions, experiences, or traditions. Therefore their creation is a public process (155). Through the trying interview process, I gained a new set of symbols in which to communicate with my informants. Together we invented a new language grown out of understanding and respect. I had to learn the lingo the community used for the church, school, and community. For example Ramseyer Presbyterian Church is known and referred to as Presby. The Presby singing band is what we would refer to as the choir. These were just a few of the countless words that I acquired through conversations and interactions with the community. Mama Twum-Barimah accompanied me on all of my interviews so it was imperative that we held a shared set of vocabulary. Mama was able to articulate and

reinforce ideas that had been brought to the surface during an interview. When Mama and I walked back from interviews she spent that time expanding upon the interview and answering any questions I had. Most of the conversations revolved around context and the person's linkage to the community and church. In order for me to fully understand and articulate questions I had to be able to understand the people of Bompata's world view and put my white American women's understanding of the world in the background. For me, science answers most of the questions of how the world works, but for most of the people I encountered a story answers the "how" question. While interviewing I had to be able to articulate the questions in a way that would align with the people of Bompata's notion of how the world works.

The circumstances of the particular point of history in which I found myself living in Bompata dictated the research results I compiled. Paul Ricoeur defines hermeneutics as the "comprehension of self by the detour of the comprehension of the other" (Rabinow 5). The culturally mediated and historically situated self is thrust into the continuously changing world of meaning (6). My informants' answers were mediated through their culture and interpreted through my cultural context. The questions concerning inculturation were historically situated 125 years after the insertion of Christianity in Bompata. Hence, I have to acknowledge that I am looking at the process from a moment in time. The people have had time to reflect upon Christianity and have allowed the founding story to become a key part of their identity as members of the community of Bompata. The questions presented and the answers received were therefore historically and culturally mediated (119). As a result the data is mediated twice: first through the researcher and secondly through the self-reflection we demand of the informants (119). I

originally assembled questions based on my limited knowledge of the village of Bompata. I knew that entry into the village would alter the questions and language they were presented in. My host mother translated most of the questions, thereby allowing for the diction to be altered in such a way that the participant could adequately understand the intentions of the question.

Living with a very highly respected member of the community helped incorporate me into the society and provided me with a conferred status. Because of the high standing, however, it limited my access to practices that did not align with Christian teachings. I stayed with the pastor and his wife; therefore none of my interviewees would speak against the church and no members would admit to practicing any remnants of traditional religion. Reverend Twum-Barimah (Papa Twum) is the local head Pastor of Ramsayer Presbyterian Church and his wife, Mama Twum-Barimah, is the headmistress of the Bompata Presbyterian Junior Secondary School. According to Kottak, every community has people who have the most complete or constructive information about a particular aspect of life (Kottak 29). The Twum-Barimahs proved to be not only the most informed members of society on aspects of Christianity, but the individuals that could most easily articulate the concepts to me since we already held similar symbolic vocabulary. I spent my days teaching at Bompata Presbyterian Junior Secondary School. The subjects included religious and moral education, social studies, and English. Some mornings, I woke early to run with the students and help them prepare for the approaching sporting events. The afternoons were initially spent playing handball with the female teachers and some of the female students. Although it's hard to articulate exactly how these shared activities furthered my research, it added a level of camaraderie

with the village and gave me a sense of confidence which pushed my status further along the spectrum toward a native standing rather than being solidly an outsider.

Similar to Rabinow, I found that after a month or so my relationship with the village changed. Rabinow's initial strangeness was wearing off after that time, and my own novelty was also disappearing (Rabinow 111). After becoming acclimated to my new environment and with much encouragement from Mama Twum-Barimah, I began spending the afternoons interviewing church members and key community leaders, such as the chief's wife. The evenings were predominantly devoted to worship services or family fellowship. Through participant observation I was able to take part in the community life while studying it (Kottak 27). Weeks were devoted to particular themes and services were conducted Monday through Thursday. On Friday community deliverance services were preformed. The week culminated with Sunday service followed by lunch at the Twum-Barimah's home. All services were preformed in Twi. Parts were translated into English, but most of the translation was done individually through a family member for my benefit. I participated in events in order to get a better understanding of how the community perceived them (27). It allowed me to not only see how events were organized and conducted but how the community found them meaningful (27).

Teaching at the Bompata Presbyterian Junior Secondary School and living with the Twum-Barimah family were my primary objectives. Researching for my thesis was a secondary duty. I examined the impact and influence that the Presbyterian Church had on the community of Bompata. I observed the dialectic relationship of Christianity and traditional society at a particular point in time. I asked members of the church and

community about their personal beliefs and then asked about the church's impact on the community. Through both elicited and open-ended conversations, I was able to adjust particular questions, recognize themes that arose, and have interviewers expand upon them. My research method was an interview schedule rather than a questionnaire (Kottak 28). An interview schedule is an ethnographic tool used to structure formal interviews (28). It usually consists of a prepared form to guide interviews with individuals allowing for later comparison (28). This particular interview style allowed me to connect directly to the people of Bompata and adjust questions based on the flow of conversation. There is a sharp contrast between interview schedules and questionnaires which are more impersonal. The people of Arembepieros talk warmly of the visits Kottak made to their homes to ask questions which made them feel as if he treated them with mutual respect. This is in contrast to the other outsiders who simply gave questionnaires with the preconceived notions that the Arembepieros were poor and backwards (29).

Because this was my first attempt at researching and interviewing, many uncertainties and ambiguities arose. As the interviews progressed I became more confident in the process, thereby allowing the interviewee to feel more comfortable with me. I found that individuals I had personal relationships with were more willing to openly share information and personal insights. The interview schedule allows for quantitative as well as qualitative data (Kottak 29). It provided a basis for assessing patterns and exceptions to the village life (29). The same core questions were posed but, as the interview proceeded, I was able to expand upon and follow out indigenous categories or questions which arose (29). The interview process, although not my first objective, ended up being one of the ways in which I was better able to integrate into the society.

People opened their homes and shared their lives with me. They were intrigued by my interest in their lives and community. Every interview took a little longer to get to because we had a few more people to stop and greet along the way. These interviews allowed me to better understand how Christianity was functioning in their lives. The interview schedule was a structure that “directed but did not confine” me as a researcher (29).

My relationships had a great influence on the information I collected. Mama Twum-Barimah accompanied me on my journeys; therefore, her influence was always present. Rabinow found that the more he used a particular informant, the more he became “their informant” (Rabinow 75). I found myself in a similar position. I was no doubt the Twum-Barimah’s guest. My cultural consultant, Mama Twum, facilitated my learning of the culture and provided me with the emic (native-oriented) perspective (Kottak 30). I cannot speak the Twi language so most interviews were translated by Mama Twum-Barimah into the English language. Out of a cultural sense of respect, some of my interviewees spoke in English despite their lack of proficiency in the English language. Rabinow stated that, “good fieldwork should be done in a group’s primary language” (70). From the onset, I knew my data collection would be limited by my language proficiency. Having a translator like Mama Twum-Barimah aided my research greatly.

The translation process began with me presenting a question to Mama Twum-Barimah in English. Mama would then translate the English question into Twi for the informant. The informant would then answer the question in Twi. Mama Twum would translate the Twi into English for me. Once she was finished translating the informant’s

response she would clarify the answer for me. We would discuss the answer and if further clarification was needed Mama would revert back to the informant in Twi and respond to me in English. This translation process allowed for questions and answers to be construed. It also allowed for clarification. I was able to observe non-verbal communication throughout the translating process. In some ways, the translation process aided my work (due to my time constraints) but it also placed a barrier between me and the informant. All translated information was mediated through Mama, therefore coming through her cultural lens.

My presence as an outsider may have influenced the information I collected. The definition of anthropology proposed by Paul Rabinow consisted of participant observation (Rabinow 79). The observation element situates the anthropologists' activities while the participation moves one in a direction. One is still an outsider as well as an observer. The aspect of being an outsider is continuously present (79). In my case my skin color and accent immediately identified me as an outsider. Participation allows the anthropologist to move towards "Not-Otherness" but the context is still ultimately observation and externality (79). There is a dialectic relationship between observation and participation. Participation transforms anthropologists and allows them to have new observations. These new observations change the way in which the anthropologist participates (79-80). There must however be a starting point to one's cultural immersion, and mine began when I entered the town of Bompata to observe. At the beginning, I sat quietly in the teachers' lounge and observed the interactions between the teaching staff. As time passed, questions were addressed to me. In my final days I was fully

participating in conversation and invited to play the games. At times, the conversation reverted back to Twi and I was quickly reminded of my outsider status.

The questions I presented the interviewees may have also influenced the outcome of the answers. “Anthropology is an interpretive science,” as Kottak says (151). Both the ethnographer and the informant are imbedded in a culturally mediated world; therefore neither the ethnographer nor the informant carries a privileged position. There is no possible way for either to eliminate their stream of consciousness from activities hence no objective truths can be obtained (151). An ethnographer is interpreting something which itself is already an interpretation; consequently every cultural fact can have multiple interpretations (150).

My ethnography will focus on the emic (native-oriented) approach with the incorporation of the etic (scientific-oriented) approach (Kottak 30-31). I realize that my informants are so imbedded in their culture that I will have insights that may not be recognizable to the people themselves, but their stories will provide me with a framework to analyze (30). I will be telling the 125 year story of the process of inculturation of Christianity in the town of Bompata. I will be examining a particular historical moment of inculturation from my personal observation, mediated through the voices of the people of Bompata. I acknowledge that I will be trying to apply western categories of objective knowledge and history to the people’s long standing oral tradition.



## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY

#### Missionary Movement

Protestant Britain in 1698 founded the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK). This was Britain's first attempt at reaching out to those people not under the influence of the English educational system (Pennington 27). The full scale missionary movement was not born until the nineteenth century when large numbers of Europeans began going abroad. It first began with an attempt to educate the coarse and ignorant British citizens who worked in the factories, coal mines, and foreign plantations. The effort was then spread to foreigners living under British influence (27). The SPCK was founded under the mission to distribute fundamental Christian teachings. They focused on dispensing Bibles, New Testaments, and Common Prayer Books.

Thomas Bray, founder of the SPCK, acknowledged the need for instructors or ministers. He petitioned the King in 1701 to charter an organization that would provide the British Colonies with missionaries (28). This organization came to be known as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG). At first, the main mission was to assure that the British natives living in colonies maintained their beliefs and only secondly did it seek the "conversion of the natives." However, the main focus quickly switched to the salvation of the "heathens" (28). Two decades into the nineteenth

century many mission societies and organizations committed to evangelism were chartered, such as the Baptist Missionary Society, Christian Missionary Society, and London Missionary Society (28-29). Societies were also chartered to collect moneys and print Bibles. According to Brian Pennington, Associate Professor of Religion at Maryville College, “this sudden proliferation of organized concern for the propagation of Christianity marked the commencement of the ‘Age of Missions’” (29). This age was focused on the saving of heathens and assuring their salvation from sin, providing them with life after death.

When Western missionaries first came to the continent of Africa there was an imbalance. The dialogue between the gospel and the African worldview was absent. It was simply a monologue by the Western missionaries (Odozor 584). There has since been an attempt to reconcile the loss of African identity through an open dialogue between Western Christianity and African culture. There has been a move towards inculturating theology in Africa (584). Whenever the Word of God is brought to a new culture, the people are pressured to change their value system and view of reality. This is the gateway where the dialogue between the gospel and the current culture ensues (585).

Inculturation<sup>2</sup> calls for the separation of the “gospel from the cultural context of its transmission” (Odozor 586). The process of inculturation recognizes that the culture of the evangelizer must be identified in order to distinguish the teachings of the religious tradition from the culture of the missionaries. This distinction ensures that the new society can receive the Word without giving up all of its current culture and allows the

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<sup>2</sup> Inculturation will be further defined in Chapter 3.

local society to synchronize its expression of the gospel (Odozor 586). This process aims to bring about a religious tradition which is true to the local people and their traditions.

As a description of the relationship of church and culture the term “inculturation” is better equipped to deal with the complex realities of intercultural communication than previous terms such as enculturation, acculturation, adaptation, or integration. Many scholars argue that inculturation can best be defined as the process of the Gospel or Word of God intersecting with a culture, but it is truly a more complex process. Inculturation is an open dialogue which arises when a religious tradition carried in the evangelizer’s culture is placed in a new indigenous culture.

#### Historical Background of Ghana

The Gold Coast, located off the Gulf of Guinea and current day Ghana, was first colonized in 1874 by the British crown. The Ashanti Kingdom was the largest empire on the Gold Coast. The kingdom was comprised of the Twi-speaking members of the Akan people. The Akan are indigenous ethnic groups which can be found in Ghana and the southeastern part of Cote D’Ivoire. They all share a similar language and culture. In Ghana the Akan include the Fante, the Akuapem, the Kwahu, the Asante, the Akyem, the Denkyira, the Akwamu, the Agona, the Adansi, the Assin, the Ahanta, the Brong, the Efutu, the Gomoa, the Sefwi, the Twifo, and the Wassa (Waife 12). The Ashanti developed a strong empire that reached its peak in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. After a long struggle, the Ashanti Kingdom succumbed to the British in 1896 (Gifford 57). The introduction of Protestantism into Ghana originated with the Basel Mission in 1828, which was joined shortly after by the Methodists in 1835 (58). Over the next hundred years Christianity began to take root and spread throughout the land.

Kwame Nkrumah, an advocate of Pan-Africanism, was instrumental in the liberation and creation of the new nation-state Ghana. Nkrumah created the Convention People's Party (CPP) in hopes of "self-governance now" (Gifford 58). He was supported by farmers, market women, and small business owners ("Verandah Boys"). In 1952 Nkrumah won the seat of Prime Minister and was reelected in 1956 despite not having the support of the Ashanti people (which was the largest tribe at the time) (58). Nkrumah was the Prime Minister when Ghana received independence in March of 1957. Ghana was the first colonized African country to gain independence. The impact of the Protestant missions was evident in the CPP's rhetoric. Nkrumah was able to express his pan-Africanism and socialism in Christian metaphors (58).

Sixty percent of the 19 million Ghanaians declare to be Christian, sixteen percent declare to be Muslim, and twenty percent adhere to traditional religions (Gifford 61). Christianity has gained support since 1960 when 43% were Christian and 45% practiced traditional religion. Christian rhetoric is displayed on public transportation, food stands, and billboards. African Traditional Religion is declining while mainline churches are stagnating, and the Pentecostal and mission-related churches are growing significantly (63).

The main protestant denominations are Methodist, Presbyterians (Basel Mission), Evangelical Presbyterian (Breman Mission), and Anglican (Gifford 67-68). The foremost contribution of these protestant missions was the establishment of schools. These schools have created an educated elite class in Ghana. Some of those educated elite have gone on to be influential all over Africa. The Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) was founded in 1929 and is comprised of fourteen churches. The CCG is quite influential and conducts

much of the church's public activity (68). The CCG at times partners with the Catholic Church. In 1992, the churches came together to promote peaceful elections in Ghana (69). The mainline churches are covered by newspapers such as the Methodist Times, the Christian Messenger, and the Standard (70). The articles comprising these newspapers critically address the concerns of the government as well as human rights issues. Many of the papers contain biblical allusions (70).

The protestant churches in Ghana are closer to evangelical churches in the West and in no way resemble liberal churches of the West (Gifford 73). A literal, more fundamental reading of the Bible takes place in Ghanaian mainline churches. Women are instructed to succumb to their husbands (73). Therefore, women are often placed in a subservient role not only in the households but in the church as well. Critical reading and interpretation of the Biblical text does not take place in most Ghanaian congregations. The theology that the missionaries brought in the eighteenth century, which most western denominations no longer hold to, is the dominant theology found in Ghanaian congregations.

The Ramseyer Presbyterian church, the subject of this study, was planted by Dutch Calvinists in the 1800's. It is the largest church in Bompata. The church also sponsors the village's primary and high schools. The village is located in the Asante region. Ramseyer Presbyterian Church is a member of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG). The PCG traces its roots to the Basel Mission which was the first mission to successfully evangelize the Gold Coast. In December of 1828 the first four missionaries arrived to Osu, but unfortunately they did not survive the year. The next wave of missionaries from the Basel Mission came in 1832. They, like their predecessors, lived

amongst the people and learned the Galanguage which is the language found in the Accra area. Two of the three missionaries died, so Andreas Riis became the lone survivor. He carried on the mission and was bold enough to move it from Osu to Akropong and explore Akyem. Riis moved the mission from the coastline of Ghana into the interior of the nation which was an unexplored mission field. In 1840 Riis returned to Basel. On April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1843 the Basel Mission decided to make another attempt at evangelism, this time relying on African descendants from Jamaica. They were thought to be less susceptible to malaria and better able to withstand the tropical climate (Welcome to Presbyterian Church of Ghana).

The settlements in Osu and Akropong were the beginning stages of the Christian movement. Baptisms began to take place in 1847, and a seminary was established in 1848. Local people were recruited to spread the word. From the years 1850 to 1870 the Basel Mission saw incredible growth and consolidation. The Bible was translated into Ga in 1866 by Johannes Zimmerman and in 1870 the Bible was translated into Twi by Christaller. The Basel Mission was the first attempt by the Europeans to Christianize the interior of Ghana (WPCG).

The Ashanti kingdom was more resistant to European institutions – including the Christian church – than other regions of Ghana. Reverend Fritz Ramseyer contributed to the mission in the Ashanti region. When Ramseyer was captured by the Ashanti people, the British felt that they finally had an excuse to attack the Ashanti kingdom in the Sagrenti War of 1874. When Ramseyer was finally released he was assigned to Abetifi. In 1899, he again began a Christian movement in the Kumasi area and performed over 30 baptisms. The mission spread from Kumasi to Techimantia and BrongAhafo (WPCG).

When the First World War broke out in 1914 the British missionaries were expelled from the Gold Coast. Therefore, the mission of the church fell into the hands of Ghanaians. The Ghanaian Christian community rose to the challenge. Church leaders were trained at AkropongSeminary which was created in the early 1850's. When the Scottish missionaries arrived led by Dr. A.W. Wilkie they assisted the Ghanaians in restructuring the church's administrative structure. In alignment with the Reformed polity they adapted a more democratic system (WPCG).

The early converts to Christianity found themselves at odds with the traditional ways of life that had been handed down for generations. There were conflicts between the believers' new faith on the one hand and old practices and rituals on the other. For example, the Basel Mission also introduced the idea of communal living. These communities became known as Salems. The salems provided adherents with a place to escape the persecution of the traditional system. The salems grew into small towns and villages and helped to spread the Christian mission. In order for the salem system to work, the pastors bought plots of land outside the town or village. The salems were places free from traditional obligations and gave the pastors the ability to provide pastoral care. They introduced division into Ghanaian communities creating an educated class of Christians in Ghanaian society, thereby gaining the access to higher education and better jobs. They came to regard their fellow non-Christian Ghanaian brothers as barbarous and uncivilized. This undermined the traditional leaders while endangering social cohesion. The salems contributed to the modernization and growth of the elite community that they were associated with (WPCG).

By 2004 the Presbyterian Church of Ghana was running 1,907 schools and one University. There are now 37 health institutions associated with the church. Agricultural development programs are also sponsored by the PCG. Market and prison ministries are vital aspects of the mission. The vernacular tongue has been in use in Ghanaian churches for over 176 years, and much of the literature has been translated. The membership of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana is around 527,000 and rising (WPCG).





## Historical Background of Bompata

Ramseyer Presbyterian Church is located in the village of Bompata, Ghana (West Africa). Bompata is in Asante-Akyem which is in the southern part of the Asante Region. This area used to be a buffer between the Asante and the Akyem, Kwahu Akyem, Kotoku, and Akyem Bosome. The area encompassing and surrounding the Ashante Kingdom used to be very unstable (Frempong 11).

Bompata was created by villagers escaping the persecution of the Asantehene. Asante-Akyem was under the Omanhene (traditional ruler) of Akyem Kotoku the Odahene. He married Nana Ofosuaa who was from a village near Dwansa, and she gave birth to Nana Akomentan and Nana Anopim. Their sons were given the stools (thrones) in Aninsua and Bompata. Odahene was given a sub-chief, Nana Oduawere, who ruled over the kotoku and Dwansa. Nana Oduawere left this village and settled in Gyadam. As soon as he left Gyadam the sub-chiefs confiscated the land. Nana Oduawere left because of the presence of the Asantehene in her territory. Asante-Akyem began to fall to pieces so the Asantehene broke them into smaller sections and put them under the sub-chiefs in Kumasi (Frempong 11).

The village of Dwaben rebelled against the Ashanti kingdom, also known as the Golden Stool, but Dwaben fell to the powerful Ashanti (Frempong 11). The Amantena people were afraid that the Asantehene might attack them while searching for Dwaben. The Amantena had murdered the servant of Nana Bonsu Panin the Asantehene. The servant was sent to arrest the Amantenahene. The Amantena women were not allowed to attend the funeral of the Nana Opoku Ware. Therefore, the Amantena left their current village to settle in Bompata which consisted of a small cottage that was owned by Nana

Adow Kwaata. “Nana Adow was the maternal nephew of Nananom Anopim and Akomentan” (12). Their father Nana Oduawere had given them the land of Bompata (12).

Bompata began to grow into a village but not without the fear of attack by the Asantehene. Nana Kwabena Atta became the Bompatahene after the death of Adow Kwaata. With the fear of invasion, Nana Kwabena Aatta and his subjects heard that if the Christian community was present it would receive European protection from attacks. They had heard that Christianity had reached Kwahu and that missionaries were present in Abetifi (Frempong 12).

#### Ramseyer Presbyterian Church

In 1889, Opanyin Asante and Kwaku Asamoah were sent by Nana KwabenaAttisa and Nana Yaa Afre to Abetifi to seek the Reverend Ramseyer. Reverend Ramseyer was asked to plant Christianity in Bompata. This was the first church planted in an area under the control of the Ashante Kingdom (Frempong 12). Reverend Ramseyer and catechist Phillip Kwabi headed to Bompata to preach and then returned to Abetefi (12).

In the year 1890, Reverend Ramseyer sent Phillip Kwabi back to Bompata to be a resident catechist. Phillip Kwabi stayed with Nana Kwadwo and his wife Tanoa. The catechist preached, but due to the social conditions he was unable to stay. Another catechist was sent, Mr. SamulBoateng, and he later became ordained. He became the first minister of Ramseyer Presbyterian Church and the first minister in the Ashante region. His evangelism was aided by the help of the Bompatahene and the Dwabenhene (Frempong 12).

Mr. Samuel Boateng stayed with the fetish (traditional) priest until he had converted his first five members. These members were baptized by Reverend Ramseyer on December 6, 1891. After a few more converts were added Boateng sought a piece of land from the elders and chief. The land was for a Mission Station. It also provided a separate township for the Christians which came to be known as Salem. In April 1893, more converts were baptized. With the growing number of Christians a manse was built. The minister's house included a large room where services were held. The space was also used as a classroom which was the first formal school in the Ashante region. The school began in 1893 (Frempong 12).

Samuel Boateng was responsible for introducing many items into the Ashante region, specifically Bompata. The first cocoa pods were introduced and planted near the Asankare road. Orange and other fruits were also brought and planted (Frempong 12). In 1893 a school teacher, Martin Donkor, was posted to help Reverend Boateng teach and preach the gospel. By 1894 the congregation had increased by 50 converts. With the influx in membership the minister's home proved to be too small a space, so a chapel was commissioned in 1895 and completed by 1902. There was much community involvement in the construction of the chapel. For instance, men were brought from Abetifi timber because no one was familiar with the craft of sawyer. These men, under the instruction of Reverend Boateng, cut down the Oduntree which was the shrine of Okomfo Amaning (one of the local spirits). The shrine of the fetish Dente belonged to Kwame Dako (Frempong 13).

Stations were opened up in Patriensa, Odumase, and Agogo. The educational aspect went along with the preaching. The educational system in Bompata only went up to grade four further education required travel to Begoro (Frempong13).

Mr. Boateng became the Reverend Boateng in 1898 when he was ordained as a full minister of the Basel Mission. He was reposted to Bompata until April 1908 where he served for 16 years. The chiefs and elders cooperated with the evangelists because the European influence made the government pay attention to a small village which previously had no stature. The village of Bompata even fought on the side of the British during the Yaa Asantewa Rebellion of 1900. This was an uprising staged by the Ashanti's against the British Empire. The government, in response, created the Bompata Stool. The Bompatahene, Nana Kwadwo Dakwa, was one of the first chiefs to try civil and criminal cases according to British Common Law along with customary law. Even the case between Asokore and Afigyaase's land dispute was taken to Bompata to be settled by Nana Kwadwo Dakwa (Frempong 13).

Ashante laws against taboos which were once enforced on all became increasingly hard to maintain in Bompata. Previously, it had been forbidden to eat fish out of the Pra River but Reverend Boateng encouraged people in his congregation to not only fish but to grow water yams in the river. The river was seen to be a god, and those who practice traditional religion and lived near the Pra River worship it. Traditional Marriage and Puberty rights also began to give way to Christian practices especially in the Christian Mission station of the village. The main reason that separate townships for converts were created was to eliminate the temptation of fetish and pagan practices. Hymns replaced the traditional dancing and drumming. More sub-stations were opened

in Atwedee, Asankare, Muramura, Ahyiresu, and Dampong. It was common practice that members of the sub-stations would travel to Bompata for the Sunday service. The first Holy Communion cups were brought by Reverend Otoo Schimming (Frempong 14).

#### Reverend Twum-Barimah

The Reverend Kwaku Twum-Barimah is the current pastor at Ramseyer Presbyterian Church in Bompata, Ghana. He was born on September 24, 1950 into a polygamous family. Upon his father's death (his father had been simultaneously married to five different women), Reverend Twum-Barimah had the opportunity to become the chief of his home village but declined, feeling that the duties of a chief did not align with Christian teachings.

According to Reverend Twum-Barimah's resume, written by Frank Twum-Barimah, the reverend graduated from the Teacher Training College at Fosu in 1975 where he obtained his Teachers Certificate A. While in school Twum-Barimah met his wife Joyce Twum-Barimah. They have been married since and have five children. Twum-Barimah taught and became a school head master before being called into ministry. From 1986 to 1991 he was the Catechist at Presbyterian Church at Dormaa-Ahenkro. In August of 1994, he attended Trinity College at the University of Ghana where he obtained a Diploma in Divinity. In 1994 he was commissioned, and by 1996 he had been ordained.

In 1994, the Reverend Twum-Barimah was appointed to the Tease Agricultural and Development project in Tease (Kwahu Presbytery). Twum-Barimah was instrumental in the planning and implementation of the organization's community educational programs which served farmers as well as community members. He

provided excellent agricultural and health programs to farmers across the Afram Plains District. While preparing budget proposals for the Presbyteries of Kwahu (Ghana) and Salem (United States), he was also responsible for assessing the program's effects and impacts on the development of the District. In 1997, he became the District Minister for the Tease District Kwahu Presbytery. Here he was able to preside over the District Executive Committee which was comprised of 15 congregations.

In the year 2002, Reverend Twum-Barimah was appointed to the Bompata District where he became the District Minister. He currently supervises the congregation in Bompata along with the diverse congregations in the district. While ensuring the administrative aspect is managed, he is also responsible for the spiritual life of the district. Prayer and deliverance services are hosted for the district as well as the community at large. The prayer services bring the local community together in difficult times, while the deliverance services extract evil spirits from members of the community. The Reverend Twum-Barimah sits on the educational boards. He is also responsible for the planning and the implementation of community development projects within the area. Counseling and advising church and community members is a daily task. He actively serves on the Presbyterian Session and is the chief executive to all of the congregations within the district.

The Reverend Twum-Barimah also assumes the position of director of Ecumenical and Social Relations in the Ashanti Akim Presbytery. Here he is responsible for sustaining and improving the relationships between the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the global community. He chairs committees such as the inter-church and the social relations. The Reverend advises the Presbyterian Committee in matters concerning the

relations of churches, whether they are between inter-churches, ecumenical bodies, or global church's relations. Through communication with the residents and good implementation of church policies a healthy community is created.

## CHAPTER III

### THEORY

This chapter will lay the foundation for the subsequent chapter. The commonly used terms for dealing with the meeting of two cultures, in this case an entity called the church and a culture, will be clearly defined. Many people prefer to use the terms enculturation, socialization, acculturation, adaptation and accommodation, contextualization, and indigenization, but I prefer the term inculturation. Inculturation is better equipped to address the complex process of the Christian tradition meeting the African culture. It acknowledges that the missionaries' culture was imbedded in the Christian tradition proselytized to the people of Bompata. Inculturation allows for a mutual dialogue to ensue where not only the culture of impact is affected but also the tradition itself is influenced.

Kieran Scott, an associate professor and chair of the theology department at St. Bonaventure University, wrote an article entitled the *Three Traditions of Religious Education*. The article called for a "blessed rage" in the field of religious education (Scott 323). She believed that there was no clear definition of the religious field and that its terminology had no clear definitions or agreed upon meanings. She endeavored to set out a clear definition of terms by acknowledging the fact that there are different "lenses of reality." There are different ways in which one can view the phenomenon. My third



chapter will attempt to set out the terms of my argument by clearly defining them and distinguishing between enculturation and acculturation.

### Enculturation

Dr. E. U. Umorem, lecturer at the Institute of Foundation Studies River State in Nigeria, believes enculturation to be an anthropological word. The term “enculturation” was coined by J.M. Herskovits and is the “process of learning from infancy till death.” It comprises the elements of life in the context of one’s culture, including material and non-material culture (values, attitudes, belief) (Umorem 1). Enculturation can refer to the process of learning and allowing one’s culture to become a point of reference and basis for all interpretation of reality (1). Enculturation takes place when a person is inserted, usually from birth, into a culture and the culture becomes their own (Owoahene-Acheampong 33).

Peter Deeley, a clinical worker in the section on brain maturation at the Institute of Psychology, believes that enculturation is the process by which humans “acquire concepts, motivations, and behaviors that are typical of their social group” (Deeley 255). Humans respond to emotional stimulus, such as religious stimuli, which have been acquired through the process of social referencing and emotional perception. Enculturation takes place through the continuous repetitive relation of logical memories to an emotional behavioral tendency. Humans can be conditioned to have particular emotional responses to specific stimuli. In religion, rituals are the primary stimulus for transmitting concepts of the world. Through the process of enculturation rituals are given meaning and become a reality in the world.

The social sciences have adopted the term enculturation, which it uses to refer to the interaction between an individual and a culture (34). Enculturation is the learning process an individual undergoes in their society. It is similar to socialization but the process takes place indirectly. A person teaches themselves through adapting to the given rules of a society (Shorter 5). Through the process of socialization in society the individual gains a personal identity (Berger 3). “Society is a dialectic phenomenon.” Society is created by humans yet humans are a product of society (3). There are three steps in the process. They include externalization, objectivation, and internalization (4). Externalization is the input of human’s physical and mental activities into the world. Objectivation is the perception of the externalized world as an outside reality to human beings. Internalization is the process of human beings internalizing the outside reality and allowing it to transform them.

Enculturation is similar to the process of socialization, the “education of an individual by society” (Shorter 5). Every human is responsible for learning a culture. Most of the process is informal and is taught through an individual adapting to a society’s rules (5). The images and symbols of a society are didactic and allow for an individual to create his or her own categories. This process allows one to understand experience in context of one’s culture (5). The individual adapts to a cultures symbols and concepts (5).

The term enculturation does not fully encompass the depth of the process of one faith tradition being inserted into a new or different culture the way inculturation is able to. It to some extent highlights a number of the issues but does not fully encompass them all. Enculturation is the process of an individual being inserted into a culture whereas

inculturation is the process of inserting a faith tradition into a culture where it does not currently exist (6). Therefore, the term inculturation will work better than enculturation for the terms of this study.

### Acculturation

Acculturation is a social science term referring to the meeting of two cultures and the challenges that arise from this meeting (Owoahene-Acheampong 32). It takes place through first hand exchanges and is when one or both of the cultures take on some or many of the other culture's practices. The term does not adequately address the issues that will be presented in the study. The study examines the meeting of the Christian Church with another culture. It is not two cultures coming together but rather a culture and an entity called the church or mission which has no direct tie to one particular culture. It is the intersection where the church becomes a part of its host culture (31). Acculturation is the interaction of two cultures upon each other (Shorter 7). This intersection of the two cultures is the primary cause of cultural modification (7). Humans have the ability to alter their culture by participating in and interacting with another culture (7). Acculturation takes place through the "encounter between two different sets of symbols and conceptions, two different interpretations of experience, and two different social identities" (7). Typically the interaction is unintentional and the process is complex with many of the struggles worked out at the subconscious level (7). Culture is a product of ideas and behaviors which cannot be distinguished from each other. When ones behaviors are changed ones ideas are impacted and when ones ideas are impacted their behaviors are influenced (7).

The process of acculturation is a historical process, so when dealing with the encounter between cultures one is dealing with a “dynamic and diachronic phenomenon (Shorter 7).” The process is not unchanging or static; rather culture is evolving throughout history (7). When one is studying the process it is important to acknowledge the complexity of the encounter.

The term acculturation is important to understand when dealing with inculturation. When a foreign religious tradition is being inserted into new culture there are some forms of cultural exchange (acculturation). Acculturation is an important process in inculturation but the words are not identical, despite the fact that many authors mistakenly use the terms interchangeably (Shorter 6). The church is embodied in a culture but other elements are present. Many of the processes that take place within cultures’ meeting are present in the exchange between a church and a host culture. There are certain process and challenges that are particular to the entity of the church meeting a new culture. Elements are present which are not purely cultural and these elements must be synchronized into the host culture. The term acculturation is a sociological concept which is present in the theological concept of inculturation (Shorter 6).

#### Adaptation and Accommodation

In the past, the meeting of predominantly Western Christianity with another culture was termed “adaptation” or “accommodation” (Owoahene-Acheampong 29-30). These words would be used interchangeably and were the most predominantly used terms in the field (29). Adaptation and accommodation dealt with the impact missions had on developing countries. The missionaries were trying to find ways to present their message so that it was more appealing to the customs and practices of the native people (20). The

missionaries were trying to fit the Christian rituals and spiritual activities into the customs of the native culture. These terms are now frowned upon because they are seen as holding western thought superiority as well as being insulting to other cultures. When using accommodation and adaptation one is discrediting the indigenous culture by implying that it has no function in changing Christianity (20). It seems to see the relationship as a one sided interaction, not recognizing the reality that missionaries brought their own culture imbedded within their religion. The terms accommodation and adaptation are considered to “express the external aspect” of the intersection of Christianity and different cultures (30). Accommodation and Adaptation do not adequately address the inner dialogue that is taking place between Christianity and the culture of impact. Therefore, the terms would not sufficiently capture the complexity of the encounter of the Christian church with the African culture.

#### Contextualization and Indigenization

The problem with the term “contextualization” is that it focuses on the context of the interaction rather than the culture (Owoahene-Acheampong 20). It looks at specific cases and how theology is applied to direct instances and contexts. Contextualization is unable to provide a constant and solid definition because it does not take into account the fact that culture is dynamic and changing. The language of faith and the church’s context are defined in foreign terms (30). It focuses on a particular situation in which the gospel must be contextualized rather than looking at the culture as a whole and seeing how the host culture and the church interact with each other (30).

The term ‘indigenous’ means to be native to a particular land or to be born to a particular culture (Owoahene-Acheampong 30). Therefore the phrase “indigenization of

Christianity” is used when people native to a culture or land begin to articulate the message from their culture’s perspective (30-31). The native people begin to guide and lead, but the local church does not cut its links with the universal church (30-31). The problem faced by the term “indigenization” is that the term is too constrictive in that it focuses on the culture of contact, not recognizing that the group that brought the message transported it through their culture. The insider knows the host culture very well but is unable to recognize the changes that have taken place within their culture. This happens because they are living within the culture and are unable to distinguish or recognize the changes occurring. The term may also fall victim to not recognizing the changing process of culture. It tends to view the process as a past experience not expanding upon the changes that have occurred and are continuing to occur.

### Syncretism

According to The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions, syncretism is the combination of religious beliefs and practices which obscures the original religions. Some see syncretism not as the mixing of religion, but rather as the obscuring of religion. It can be viewed as a move from the “pure” or original form of a particular religion. All religions have been syncretistic in that they have incorporated elements of the culture or other religions that surround them (936). Syncretism refers specifically to the borrowing process that ensues.

Carsten Colpe states that syncretism is both a state and a process. Syncretism takes place over time but can be distinguished at certain points in history (8927). Syncretism can describe many phenomena such as, “the influence of one religion on another, the interpenetration of two religious systems, the mutual influence of local

religions, the appropriation of foreign divinities, or the combination of different divinities into one entity.” (8935) Syncretism is usually a result of evolution not the conscious decision to blend a religion. Some scholars disagree with the idea that syncretism is a result of a process. They believe that syncretism is the process itself. When referring to religions as systems, it is easier to understand that syncretism is the inter-working of two religious systems on each other (8935). It seems that there is no precise definition of the word syncretism, therefore one should be careful when using the term and make sure that it is clearly defined.

### Inculturation

My thesis will use the term inculturation because it provides a favorable foundation to examine the interaction of the Christian Church implanted in the African culture. It allows for dialogue to ensue between the church and the culture. In this section, I will layout the argument for the favorable term inculturation.

Paulinus Ikechukwu Odozor, associate professor at the University of Notre Dame and president of the Governing Council of the Spiritan International School of Theology located in Nigeria, states that inculturation is the “process in which the faith embodied in one culture encounters another culture and becomes embodied in it” (Odozor 585). It is a dialogue between faith and culture (585). Inculturation is the “missiological process in which the Gospel is rooted in a particular culture and the latter is transformed by its introduction to Christianity.” (Umorem 1) Both Christianity and culture are enriched by this process (1). Inculturation is used for theological purposes (Owoahene-Acheampong 33). In theological terms when a church is inserted into a particular culture and the church is embraced by that particular culture it is considered inculturated (33). A

continuous conversation ensues between the planted church and the indigenous culture that it has come into contact with.

RoestCrollius describes inculturation in this way:

The inculturation of the church is the integration of the Christian experience of a local church into the culture of its people, in such a way that this experience not only expresses itself in elements of this culture, but becomes a force that animates, orients and innovates this culture so as to create a new unity and communion, not only within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the Church universal. (Owoahene-Acheampong 33)

It can be seen that the church is not only acting on the culture that it was brought to, but that the church is also affected by the culture that it was transmitted to. The culture acts back upon the church and forms an ongoing relationship to the culture in which it is intricately interwoven. The Christian teachings and messages are integrated into the local traditions and practices and, in turn, Christian practices and teaching are influenced by the local culture. Inculturation can be seen as a mutual dialogue between the local culture and the teachings of the church. The word “inculturation” implies a mutual relationship between the evangelizer and the evangelized. It recognizes that conflicts arise when a culture is met by different religious traditions and acknowledges the need for mutual dialogue. Inculturation deals with religious traditions being integrated into a particular culture and allows religious traditions to find their place in the culture. They are given the freedom to interpret the message to fit their worldview. A process of respect and open dialogue, as well as, conflict between Christian practices and different cultures is seen as inculturation (36).



Inculturation was first used in a papal document in 1979 (Shorter 10). Fr. Pedro Arrup, SJ defines it as “the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a ‘new creation’” (Shorter 11). Inculturation refers not only the first interaction of Christian religion with a non-Christian culture but a continuous dialogue, as culture is always evolving. Christian religion can only exist in a cultural form (Shorter 12). Religion is comprised of two components: the teachings or doctrine and the culture. A religion can only exist in a cultural context; therefore it is important to acknowledge the presence of culture in the process of evangelizing. This reinterpretation can lead to syncretism (Shorter 12).

The Gospel can only be understood within a cultural context. When the missionaries first came to a new place, they presented the Gospel within their own cultural context, but as time progressed the culture to which it was presented inculturated the Word of God and made it their own. The inculturation of Christianity in the African context can be seen through the syncretism of ritual and practices, worship style, and leadership.

After clearly defining the various terms, it is evident that for the case of this study that inculturation is the most appropriate term. The term will allow for the Basel Mission’s culture to be separated from the core Christian doctrine handed to the people of Bompata. Inculturation allows syncretism to be viewed in a positive light and acknowledges syncretism as a necessary process. In this study, we will observe the

Ramseyer Presbyterian Church and its community of believers at a certain point in history. The current practices and traditions of the Bompata Presbyterian Church and its members will be viewed in light of the impact of African Culture on Christianity as well as the impact of Christianity on African culture.

Bompata has a unique history which is important to acknowledge. Christian missionaries were requested, exemplifying the towns' receptivity to Christianity from the beginning. Closely examining the practices and traditions of Ramseyer Presbyterian Church reveals that the influences of Western Christianity and African culture are mutually present.

## CHAPTER IV

### APPLICATION OF INCULTURATION

#### Vestiges of African Traditional Religion in Bompata Christianity

While attending the University of Ghana I took a class entitled New Religious Movements in Ghana. Through the course work I was able to see how Christianity was first brought into this foreign context and how Ghanaians had responded to this foreign system. Many transitional movements had been created, such as African Independent Churches. When churches were originally planted, Ghanaians were required to give up their traditional beliefs, which composed their worldview. Over time churches were able to transition to a more inculturated tradition and incorporate African customary practices and beliefs into Christian teachings. I wanted to see how this process had evolved in the village of Bompata. Knowing that Ramseyer was the first church in the Northern region of Ghana, I was intrigued to see how and if Christianity had been inculturated. I found early on that Ramseyer had a unique history. Unlike most of the Ashanti region, which received the missionaries with hostility, the chief of Bompata sent for the missionaries. He understood that if the white people were present, the Ashanti Kingdom would not attack the settlement of Bompata.

The dialogic relationship between Christianity and African culture was what I sought to find through the interview process. The influences of African culture on

Christianity as well as Christianity's effect on African culture were the main objectives of my interviews and participant observations.

One of the original questions I posed asked, "How has African culture influenced the church?" This question did not obtain explicit answers, thus the interview schedule was employed to adapt the question (Kottak 28). The original question received various answers. Some people quickly denied any African influence on the church, a set of answers which could be the result of Mama Twum-Barimah's presence. Agustina Asantiwaa, a former member of the Presbyterian Church, according to Mama's translation, stated that "[African Traditional Religion] has no influence over their African Culture. [Christians] can go to farm anytime they want and they can worship anytime they want."<sup>3</sup> Others gave the example of drumming and dancing. Margret Bempomaa, a member of the Presbyterian Church and singing band, according to Mama's translation, states, "The power of God has [been able to overturn the] fetish practices and traditional practices so they are no longer functioning." According to Mama's translation, Agustina Asantiwaa also stated, "in their church you cannot wear [just] anything [you want]. The western culture [allows its members to] wear [casual pants, shorts, and such things]. But the church [does not allow one to] wear those thing[s]. You can wear some typical [African wear] to church and [the casual pants, shorts, etc] you wear at home."<sup>4</sup> She went on to say that "at most of the big churches people wear [pants]." These larger churches are predominantly found in the urban cities, which have been exposed to a greater

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<sup>3</sup> Asantiwaa is referring to the traditional days of worship (**Akwesida**) which required abstentions from farm work.

<sup>4</sup> My informants' vernacular language was not Standard English, therefore I will translate my informants' quotes into Standard English for the readers ease.

concentration of western influence. The question of the influence of African culture on the Church did not seem to elicit the intricate, in-depth data I was seeking. I was asking the informant to “objectify his [/her] own life-world” (Rabinow 152). Therefore it was up to me to present the questions in a way that would allow the informants to think critically about the cultural views they held. I needed them to be able to objectify and distil their African culture from their Christian practices. I realized that the question of how African culture affected Christianity confused many people. My informants felt that they had to convince me of their pious attention to Christianity. There were certain themes like drumming and dancing that they were comfortable discussing but many other aspects of influence they were unaware or unable to objectify. Through open ended questions I was able to find recurring themes which pertained to traditional African religion and culture. These themes included witchcraft, healing, libations, and ancestral worship.

### Libations

For one to fully understand Africa, one must comprehend African religion (Waife 20). When examining African culture one can see that religion is the foundation. In traditional Africa “religion is life and life is religion” (19). Traditionally, religion was a way of life thereby making culture and religion inseparable. Religion gives significance to the members of the community’s lives and is incorporated into all aspects of life including fishing, eating, traveling, and farming (19).

The African Christian is still influenced by African Traditional Religion, yet people are quick to distinguish themselves from traditional practices. When libation, ancestral worship, or other traditional practices were brought to the surface, many

informants simply laughed the question away or told me stories of the olden days. I came to remove the question about libation and ancestral worship because it revealed my status as an outsider. These were topics that were no longer discussed in the Christian community. Through open ended questions other topics arose such as witch craft.

Traditional Akan belief holds that ancestors, or departed relatives, are in a state of spiritual existence. This spiritual state of ancestors affects traditional death rites, which include sacrifice and libation (Waife 2). For many African societies, libation and sacrifices are the main modes of interaction between ancestors and the living (Zahan 9719). These practices involve bilateral obligations. The relatives need the ancestors for their powers whereas the ancestors need the living relatives to ensure that they will be able to be reborn in children of their lineage (9719). Libations are usually preformed with fresh water, millet flour mixed with water, and millet beer or palm wine. Each of the elements of the libation results in a reaction by the ancestors. The water is poured on the altar first as a gesture of affection and is then followed by the millet which rises to the surface symbolizing the swallowing and digestion by the ancestor. This results in pushing the ancestor into action. The millet beer and palm wine are stimulants which excite the ancestors. The drinks result in the ancestors losing control and adhering to the wishes of the living. This is the final stage of libation before an animal sacrifice would be preformed (9719).

These practices were first addressed as pagan practices. A clear distinction between “us,” the practicing Christians in right standing, and “them,” those meddling in pagan practices, was drawn. When I interviewed Mr. Opotu Adusei, Bompata Presbyterian Harvest Committee Chairman this distinction became apparent. He

discussed some of the activities, festivals, and sacred days celebrated in the community. According to Mama's translation, he stated, "In the olden days [there] was a belief that when somebody died that that person still had a relationship with the living (*sic*).” "They are going to the ancestral world but [their] spirit is still with [you] and they can come from the ancestral world to help or do something. So those who lived good moral lives are always remembered during festivals. People come together to share [refreshments] and food so it is believed that [one should] remember the [dead]. Those who did very well you have to honor them by giving them some of the drinks and food. [This is] to show that you still remember them and their good work. So that shows that there is a relationship between the living and the dead" (Adusei). When I inquired if libations were still practiced today and if church members took part, I received a warm laugh and reassurance that church members do not take part in such things, only those who were still pagans. Mama replied, "No, members of the church don't do it." Adusei answered, "Members of the church don't do it." Mama did state in regards to other community members, "Yes, so many people do that when somebody dies at all those who are pagan, they put food before the dead person."

I then inquired about the libation that I had participated in at the chief's house in a nearby village. When we first arrived, we were greeted and welcomed followed by a prayer thanking God for traveling mercies. After introductions, a bottle of fine liquor was taken outside, prayers lifted up to the ancestors, libations poured, and the Christian males consumed some of the liquor. Mr. Opotu Adusei acknowledged that some chiefs continue to participate in such practices, but this just demonstrates their lack of adherence to church rules. According to Mama's translation, Adusei said, "That man, if you are a

Christian you can't. Some chiefs [pour libations] but others will not allow [libations] because [they are] on the stool [and they] won't allow people to do this. This shows that the man is not committed to church rules."

In his remarks, Mr. Opotu Adusei had first established distance between himself and the "olden days." He clearly drew a line between people who participated in pagan practices and himself. In the "olden days," the people of Bompata had relationships to their relatives which they continued through the practice of libations. Apparently, some people still put food out for their deceased relatives, but he considered these members of the community to be pagans. True Christians, he maintained, would not dare to participate in such practices. Adusei's reaction to my question may have been due to the fact that Mama Twum-Barimah was present. Her presence as the Reverend's wife would not allow for Adusei to be open about deemed pagan practices. When presented with the case of the chief who claimed to be Christian and still took part in traditional practices, Adusei pointed out that the chief was clearly not following the practices of the church. No one addressed the fact that there were other Christians present and participating in the libation. Throughout this interview, a clear distinction was made between the pagan traditional practices and the righteous Christian practices. From the interview, I recognized that a good Christian should have no tolerance for the allowance of ceremonial traditional practices. It also became apparent that my questions forced Adusei to draw clear distinctions partly due to the environment in which the interviews were conducted.

When I asked Reverend Twum-Barimah about the incident in which the chief offered libations, his first response was "Oh, that man!" Papa was not surprised by the



chief's lack of devotion to Christian teachings. In a later interview Reverend Twum-Barimah stated in English that, "Most Christian chiefs are running away from pouring libations. They are seeing it as the same thing [as praying to God]. Praying to God is the same as pouring the libation but the libation is not the same thing as praying to God. The libation is not directly to God but to some smaller gods or other deities, which they don't think is very necessary, so most of [the current] Christian Chiefs are trying to pick up the idea of prayer instead of pouring libations. [It's] working well. Sub-chiefs and [...] some *Omanhenes*, or the traditional (paramount) chiefs, [...] try to avoid [these] things and go to communion. Not all of them are deterred by the traditional life." Twum-Barimah himself had the opportunity to be the chief in his home village but refused the title, feeling that it would conflict with his Christian beliefs. Mr. Opotu Adusei explained, "The Bible or the scriptures [cover] everything in the church. So a committed Christian will never allow himself to be enstooled as a chief because there are some rules and regulations. Those [are] things that you pass through before you [can] ascend the throne, so a person who is committed to serving the Lord will not accept it (sic)."

The Reverend Twum-Barimah was insistent that a true Christian does not take part in the pagan practice of libation. He is hopeful that chiefs will begin to distance themselves from such practices and adopt prayer as an alternative to libations. Papa believes prayers, which were traditionally intended for the ancestors, should now be lifted solely to the triune Christian God. The act of libation for the Reverend is sacrilegious; he sees it as a definite defilement of core Christian teachings.

I then asked Reverend Twum-Barimah about the current Chief in Bompata, but Twum-Barimah did not know a great deal in regards to his practices since the chief only

spends about two weeks a year in Bompata. The chief has been outside of Bompata for about 28 years and was the permanent representative of Ghana to the United Nations for many years. He has also served as a Ghanaian ambassador to numerous countries. His absence from the village had not given Reverend Twum-Barimah a great deal of time to determine the chief's practices or beliefs.

The Queenmothers, however, have a history of attending the Presbyterian Church. Queenmothers (*ohemmaa*) are selected by the elders of the royal family and hold the role because of her seniority in the royal matrilineage. She shares joint control of the state with the chief. Historically, the Queenmothers have been responsible for filling the chief's vacant royal stool. Therefore the queenmothers are known as the "keeper of tradition and king-maker" (Arthur and Rowe 2001). According to Mama Twum-Barimah in English, "Queenmothers are selected from the royal family and [the queenmother] selects the person who will be the chief. Sometimes she is the mother of the chief himself [and] sometimes the sister. She is the one in charge of enstooling the chief. She is also consulted on important issues." The Queenmother being destooled right now was a Presbyterian communicant, and the one who just passed on was a member of the Presbyterian Church. The Queenmother they are planning to enstool attends a Presbyterian church in Accra. The queenmother, for several generations, has played a key role not only in the traditional ruling system but also in the Presbyterian Church. The lines of traditional practices and Christian teachings have been transcended. The queenmother is a trusted leader in the community and supports the entity of the church.

## African Traditional Religion

The lesser gods, *abosom*, have areas of specialization and can be approached for various needs. These deities can be approached through the traditional priest or priestess for needs including success in a new business venture, fertility, and cures for illnesses (Wiafe3). Reverend Twum-Barimah stated, in English that he, “understand[s] [that] Christianity is influencing ATR because nowadays small gods are all dying out because of [the Christian] religion. A part [of ATR’s] culture at times tries to embrace Christianity especially chieftaincy. You have a Christian being a chief so he is torn in-between [Christianity’s] world life and traditional world life so traditional worship doesn’t have much influence on Christianity. It is rather Christianity trying to absorb it and modify it to make it now better than it was before.” There were originally eleven smaller gods in Bompata but now only two remain and those two are not very active according to the Reverend.

According to Papa, the town of Bompata has been able to eliminate several of the *abosom* (lesser gods). He is able to see that African traditional religion is attempting to be inculturated but is unable to articulate the influence traditional religion has on Christianity. The dying out of traditional practices forces traditional leaders to conform to the Christian culture. There are currently only two traditional priests in town but they do not practice publicly. They only operate through secret consultations. The Reverend recognizes the dialogue traditional leaders and Christianity are taking part in. Through this dialogue both traditional religion and Christianity are being impacted. The church is beginning to support traditional leaders while traditional leaders are beginning to adapt Christian practices.

Mr. Opotu, according to Mama's translation, stated "that in the olden days there were some rituals and some activities (like we have days in which people don't go to farm). [On] these days they will bang their Fong [...]. When Christianity came those in that place around the church and out beyond, when they are beating [the] drums at all they don't go [to join in the] beat[ing of] the drum[s]. That means that Christianity opened the eyes of many people. They [now] do it in the community. Those who are not Christian that are pagan they still do it. They believe in those practices" (*sic*).

Translated through Mama, Adusei continued, "They believe that in the olden days Thursdays, which were suppose[d] to be days for worshipping maybe spiritual gods or shrines and other things if you go to farm you will see something maybe images and all something will happen to you and because of that they made those days sacred so that those days are used for worshipping their spiritual gods and ancestral spirits and maybe the river gods and those things. So on those days if you are a pagan you have to abide by those because they believe they will harm you when you go to the bush. You will [encounter] something there that is why [they do not go to farm on Thursdays]" (*sic*). Adusei recalls that on particular days, spiritual [beings] are more likely to be encountered; therefore, working on those days is prohibited by traditional laws. These holidays are still in practice today and fines can be enforced on all members of the community not adhering to them, although it is highly unlikely that one would be fined.

Through the introduction of Christianity into Bompata sacred time has shifted from Tuesdays to Sundays. Both Christianity and traditional religion have sacred days. Papa Twum-Barimah spoke on the traditional days saying, "At that time, because of these gods they had those days that you used to celebrate like [a] taboo day. The whole

community get[s] together drumming and dancing. The traditional priest interceding for the community and pacifying [and] sacrificing to the gods for protection.”Tuesday was one of the days of worship for the traditional community. The Christian tradition holds Sundays as its holy day and day of rest. Members of the community that are Christian do not go to farm on Sundays. Though the laws still reflect traditional religion, the enforcement is in alignment with Christian teachings. Most community members no longer strictly adhere to the traditional laws and practices because they feel that they are in contrast to their Christian beliefs.

For the Akans, the living and the deceased family members are very important. Eric Oduro Waife, a Catholic priest and doctoral student, spoke on the pressure to conform to traditional Akan society. The communal nature of the society creates pressures for one to conform to traditional beliefs (Waife 3-4). According to Mama’s translation, Mama Olicia Oforiwaa “was born into a Christian family and she was taught that ancestral worship and all these things were pagan practices and she never took part in [them].” “Her sons got sick and people were asking [her] to take him to so many places. She didn’t bother and [her son] died but [God] knew that she didn’t practice [traditional religion]. So even if it was God who took [her] son away, God would not blame her. So she didn’t receive [*damnation*].” Even though Mama Olivia was brought up a practicing Christian she still felt outside pressure from her friends to rely on traditional practices. This acknowledges that traditional practices still take place but Mama Olivia does not partake. Mama Olivia was enculturated (socialized) to believe that certain practices were deemed heretical; soliciting the help of traditional priests was one of these practices.

This pressure is exceedingly present when it comes to a women's fertility. Procreating and having numerous offspring is highly valued (Wiafe 3-4). There is external pressure from family and friends to bear children. Waife states that over the years, pastors and theologians have noticed that members shift back to African Traditional practices in time of crises such as poverty, sickness, and death. Papa Twum-Barimah spoke on the tendency of members to turn to traditional religion when Christian prayer does not work immediately. The Reverend believes that many Christians lack the dedication to prayer and therefore they succumb to the pressures of traditional practices.

### Healing

Waife finds that many Akan Catholics are between two worldviews: that of the church and that of African Traditional Religion. These two worlds are constantly engaged with each other. The African Synod of 1994 stated that, "African Christians, because the faith has not been received into their culture, often live in two separate worlds: the world of the traditional religion and customs and the world of Christian faith. Often they feel tension between their culture and their faith and move from one to the other [...]" (Waife 4). Therefore, parishioners are forced to live between traditions and customs of the traditional sphere and their Christian practices and faith (4-5). Tension rose between their traditional worldview and their faith in Jesus Christ (5). Traditional religion is "a way of life" (10). According to Waife, many Catholics are faced with the dilemma of consulting traditional gods in tough times when the Catholic Church teaches that Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and human beings (10). Inculturation should provide a framework for understanding how Christian teachings are incorporated into the current culture of Bompata. Healing is one of the ways in which Bompata

Christians have reconciled traditional practices with Christian principles. According to Mama's translation, Agustina Asantiwaa, a former member of the Presbyterian Church confesses, "[Christians] believe in healing and they believe in deliverance." This seemed to be the general consensus amongst church and community members. For the people of Bompata, the traditional healer's role has been filled by the Reverend Twum-Barimah. Most of Papa Twum-Barimah's parishioners have experienced healing through him, either for themselves, for family members or for friends. Papa is known in the village for the power of his prayers and healing therefore even members of the Islamic community come secretly for prayers from him. According to Mama's translation, Margret Bempomaa, "has experienced healing. She fell sick sometime ago but Papa came and prayed for her. The words papa gave to her encouraged her. She was filled with joy so through the joy she was healed." For Mama Bempomaa, the joy that filled her heart through Papa's prayers helped her heal.

Papa Twum spoke on his prayers in English, "apart from the normal prayer life we have deliverance prayer which deals with people with special problems, spiritual problems, [and] you know in Africa we have these idols witches and wizards who operate or try to destroy other people's lives and a lot of things. So at times when they have a problem, they come, [I] pray, and there is magnification of some evil spiritual force is behind so you pray and set free that person so we do that here on Friday to set those people free. People come from other churches not just Presbyterians. They come and we worship together. We pray. They are relieved and set free." Deliverance services take place every Friday afternoon and provide the community with the opportunity to gather together, pray for the community, and deliver those who are suffering from evil forces.

Papa understands that evil spiritual forces are unfamiliar concepts to me. Therefore he tries to objectify his world-view through symbolic language so that he can convey the importance of prayer to me. Prayer has been inculturated to fight against evil spirits which are responsible for spiritual ailments. In Christianity, pastors are the spiritual prayer experts; therefore it is natural for the pastor to assume the role of prayer for the removal of evil forces. Traditional priest, according to Papa Twum-Barimah, “are the go between the gods and the people of the area. When somebody offends the god the traditional priest will have to demand a sheep or goat. Sometimes the bad omen will appear through the priest to tell him that something is wrong in the community. The god will demand eggs, fowls, a bull or a cow to pacify the god. The bull or the cow [is] for when the offense is great.” The traditional priest is the mediator between the people of Bompata and the gods. The pastor’s role translates a similar traditional Akan position of the traditional priest into an acceptable Christian office.

Gladys Baah, a church Presbyterian, recounts her healing experience in English. “We were once in the church on one Friday when the pastor was preaching and then the healing service was going on. Here I was suffering from [a] severe headache but through [Reverend Twum-Barimah’s] prayers and then [through the] casting out [of] the demons I was healed.” She went on to say “as for miracles I have seen my pastor do those too but as for me I don’t have the power to do those.” Mama Baah sees a correlation between her headache and the demons within her. Through the casting out of the demons, performed by the Reverend Twum-Barimah, Mama Baah receives healing from her headache. Mama Baah acknowledges that she does not have the ability to perform such miracles but Reverend Twum-Barimah does. Margret Bempomaa, according to Mama’s



translation, states “that the small miracles that we hear people performing they use other forms of Juju [magic] or so she believes. Wherever you are it is not by going to seek miracles that it works for you. If you trust in God you can get your miracles. So for her she is where she is and doesn’t go about searching for miracles.” Mama Bempomaa does not seek miracles through traditional means rather she believes that trusting in God provides miracles. Papa states that, “the bible says pray[er] heal[s] the sick and set[s] them free from these spiritual sicknesses but not all sickness can be healed just like that, when they are under spiritual operations. So I am saying about these witchcrafts and these things: they can easily be healed, you know, once there are some of them. So during prayer healing, they may come sick and you pray and the manifestation tells [you] that they were about to be killed or being offered as offering to some shrines or some gods or to some other deities. So when you pray for such people it is very easy to get them out of that and there are some sicknesses too but by their fate [...] you can too pray to receive their healing apart from something like malaria and some chronic diseases.” Healing from evil spiritual forces takes place through prayer but the Reverend Twum-Barimah realizes that there are two form of sickness: spiritual and medical. The medical form of sickness is treated through at home administration of Western medicine and if that is unsuccessful, admittance to the hospital is necessary. Spiritual illness however can be cast out by prayer. I learned through participating in prayers and listening to sermons, that Bompata Christians believe that Jesus Christ has the power to conquer the traditional forms of magic and spiritual beings.

When Mama OliciaOforiwaa falls ill she first, according to Mama’s translation, “Prays to the church, then she goes to the clinic. That shows that she has faith in God;

that god can heal her and then it is also good to take the orthodox medicine too. Because you can pray and maybe the sickness might not be a spiritual one, so you have to seek medical attention.” Mama Oforiwaa recognizes that there are not only spiritual illnesses but also illnesses which must be treated by Western Medicine. Therefore, both methods of treatment must be sought simultaneously.

Papa’s office was in the mission house where I stayed; therefore I was able to hear and glimpse many healings. The prayers were always uttered in Twi and there was shouting, wailing, and flailing. My first encounter with the practice was frightening, but as time progressed I grew accustomed to the wails from Papa’s office. Rabinow recalls his exposure to healing; “the first time I witnessed activities like this one they required greatly heightened attention on my part.” As Rabinow and I continued fieldwork we began to take these experiences for granted. For Rabinow his full attention was not required during Ali’s healing practices whereas I was no longer taken back by the extraction of evil spirits (Rabinow 38). These once strange occurrences became routine happenings requiring less attention and contemplation.

I had the opportunity to personally experience Papa’s healing. One day I fell ill after traveling to Kumasi. I had eaten outside of the house and had contracted a stomach bug. When I was living in Accra, I was constantly eating out of a Night Market, and therefore had continuous bouts of intestinal problems. The Twum-Barimahs, of course, were very concerned with their guest’s health and offered immediately to take me to the clinic. Having experienced the poor health system in Ghana, I quickly assured them I was fine and begged them to allow me to fight it off. I was given some stomach medicine and forced to drink Oral Rehydration Minerals (ORMs). After the medicine

was administered, Papa came into my room and asked if he could pray with me. I was obviously anxious, and he told me to relax, laid his hands on my stomach and prayed in English for me. After the prayers, he informed me that we would see how that worked. If I was not feeling better the healing oils would be administered. In the morning after a long night, to my relief, I began to feel better. This experience allowed me to better understand Papa's healing practices. These were the first healing prayers that I had heard in English. The prayers seemed more reasonable and less emotional when they were in English. The prayers were also toned down for me, probably due to my hesitation. I came to realize that there was no way to determine if the illness had just run its course, like previous experiences, or if the prayers had healed me. My instinct was to assume that it was the food I had consumed earlier in the day, wreaking havoc on my digestive system, and simply needed a day to work its way out. The people of Bompata would probably attribute my healing to the prayers. This is one of the instances in which our world views would lead us to different assumptions about the same occurrence.

### Witchcraft

Most African societies hold a fundamental belief that particular members of society use supernatural means to destroy the interests of the lives of others (Marwick 1976). African witches are thought to harm others through the powers they possess or through "sorcery." They employ certain animals or spirits as their servants. The witches gather together at night usually around a fire (1976). Counter-cultural ethical standards exist amongst the witches (1977). These violations of cultural norms include practices such as promiscuous sexual behavior, nakedness, entering forbidden places such as graveyards, murdering, and eating humans. In African witchcraft the majority of attacks

are on close kinsmen or neighbors. It is mainly women who are accused of such practices. Witchcraft helps to explain to the African community the existence of evil and the inability of humans to eradicate it (9777).

Reverend Twum-Barimah states in English that, “witchcraft as I know [it] in the Ghanaian context or African context [it is known that] they don’t have something good they are evil spiritual forces that operate. Their operation is mainly to destroy other people or other good things. So in the night they operate spiritually and they can even take somebody captive spiritually. While they are alive, they will slaughter that person in spirit so that person can die at any time with just any sort of sickness or small problem and the person is dead because spiritually the life has been taken away from that person. People’s lives can be destroyed, their property can be destroyed, and a whole lot of [other] things. We have to always be alert praying against those spiritual forces so they don’t come to destroy you or what you have. That is why we have [to] take a full day on Friday to pray so that people can have their freedom from such problems.”

When asked about the individuals practicing witchcraft, Reverend Twum-Barimah responded, “It is an evil spiritual force. I can’t see them except in prayer that some manifests and tells [me] that this is a witch. [Otherwise] I wouldn’t know. So not all people, only [a] few have it. It is a matter who so ever goes in to seek for [it and] at times some get it through their parents in their early childhood. You have many children who manifest as witches and wizards and we pray for them. It is difficult to delivering such people unless they are willing to come out of those problems.”

The Reverend concludes “[...] witchcraft is an evil spiritual force which we Africans believe is not good. People do it just to have power, just to be able conquer

some other people, or to destroy some other people and to live longer and better. But in the long run, these days it is not being very good for them because people pray and most of them are being revealed so their powers are not as powerful as they use to be.” Papa maintains that through the power of prayer the people of Bompata have been able to ward off most of the witches and wizards. Prayer provides protection of the evil spirits.

Deliverance services are one of the means by which the community comes together to ward off the evil spiritual world. Papa states, “If they choose they can be delivered, [there] are some that they operate under certain circumstances so if they surrender some of these things that they remain in that power and you pray for them the omen with just get out of them and they will be free.” The power of prayer functions not just as a healing device but as a protection device as well.

Gladys Baah, in English stated, “As for witchcraft I have heard of them but (laughs) I can’t tell you how they are.” Mr. Opotu Adusei, translated by Mama, “believes that witchcraft is also in existence because witchcraft comes from the devil.” Margret Bempomaa says, “For the witchcraft she has heard a lot about it, and through preaching she has seen that witchcraft is the least in the kingdom of the devil. So she is not afraid of the devil and she doesn’t tap in the witchcraft and she doesn’t believe them and she knows they can’t do anything to her and she doesn’t care about them.” Everyone has heard of witchcraft and most are able to attribute the practice of witchcraft to the devil. This is one of the ways Christianity has adapted to traditional society. Witchcraft has served as an explanation for evil in the world in traditional African society and the devil serves as the Christian’s way of interpreting evil in the world. The Christian concept of

the devil has been inculturated in Ghana such that it is moreover seen as the source of evil presented in the form of witchcraft.

Mama Olicia Oforiwaa, translated through Mama Twum-Barimah, believes, “that it is God who created her and gave her life. That witchcraft is [here and] it is practiced. If you trust [...] [witches] or if you have faith in them then they can work against you. But if you don’t have faith in them, they can’t do anything. That if you don’t have Christ in you and you are afraid of them then they can harm you but if you have firmer. If you have faith in God they can’t do anything. They rather fear you.” Mama Oforiwaa believes that if you believe in God, witchcraft cannot affect you. Rather it is the witches that are adversely affected. One must simply confess their allegiance to Jesus Christ and God will bestow protection on his people. A Christian’s lack of personal devotion is demonstrated if they are not protected.

Agustina Asantiwaa, translated by Mama, states, “Witchcraft is [going on] now but you can [tell] people [are practicing] from their actions. People have witchcraft [but] it depends on how [they] envy things. They are saying [it] sometimes but it is not all of them that you can see. They do a lot of harm to people” (*sic*). Witches are not always apparent. Most of the times, people are identified by their actions to such things as envy. Witchcraft in Bompata is largely associated with material wealth and envy of that wealth. Papa has been credited with being able to eliminate the evil spiritual forces which keep many Bompata residences that live outside of the town from returning. With the return of these members of the community comes economic growth. The elimination of these evil spiritual forces have brought economic growth through the money outside residents bring in.

Papa Twum-Barimah made it clear at the end of his interview that, “[Witchcraft] is in the US too. It is an international affair. I was in the US in 1997 when there was TV announcement that there was going to be a witchcraft conference. I think in Chicago or so. At first hearing I thought that it was a mistake or a word I did not [understand]. It was announced again so I asked the man I was staying I hear something and he said it’s true. But you know over there the way [they] understanding witchcraft over there they usually seem to convert their spiritual experience into manufacturing or probably inventions unlike the Africans, most of whose intentions is to destroy the other and to go better.” I asked if it he meant that in the United States witchcraft is used towards things rather than people and he responded, “In the US it is centered towards manufacturing or inventions trying to make new things. [Witchcraft] is to make better or [to] do something good. Which is very good, which has brought us this far as people because it is hard to image just sitting and imagine just adding some things to make an engine and making a car and how can you even figure out if you add this will do this it would be very difficult but when that thing has been done in the spiritual realm, they know how at times some of these things they go and together with this witches I think they are able to do some things even though God has a way of also helping people to get out some ideas I think that might have helped people over there.” The Reverend cannot imagine a human being able to invent complex machines, such as a car; therefore he credits the inventor of the engine with having spiritual help. Reverend Twum-Barimah attributes the United States’ economic growth and industrial inventions to the spiritual realm. He is unable to see the possibility of an engineer simply inventing an engine without the spiritual realm having a hand in the process. According to Reverend Twum-Barimah, the problem with

witchcraft in Africa is that instead of building up other people it has been used to tear down other people. Through envy the witchcraft curses those who succeed. Witchcraft helps the Reverend to make sense of the inequalities that exist between the United States and Ghana. Some of the blame for underdevelopment can be placed on the deviant members of society: witches. Papa is quick to clarify at the end. “That is my view of it by the way that is how I feel.” He makes no claim to knowing the ultimate truth of the matters of witchcraft but his world-view and position in society have led him to these assumptions.

### Christianity’s Impact on Bompata

The church has been embraced by the culture in Bompata. A continuous conversation has ensued between the indigenous culture and the church. Over the last 125 years the Presbyterian Church of Bompata has been in conversation with the local culture, therefore not only is the culture transformed but the church itself has been transformed. The Christian teachings have been incultured and the church has in turn spread ideas and concepts that were embedded in the missionaries’ culture upon the insertion of Christianity. Inculturation is a process, not a moment. In this thesis I examined a particular historical moment to see how Christianity has evolved and impacted the local culture.

### Salem and Refuge

In Bompata a segregated Christian community developed; it became known as a salem. The salem provided the new Christian community a safe space to practice their beliefs which were at odds with the traditional religion. Unlike most communities, the traditional leaders of Bompata were more accommodating to the Christian community.



The Christians were originally welcomed but when they were to buy their first plot of land, the price was set very high. Therefore, the money had to be raised in Europe to pay the fee. When I spoke with the eldest woman in town, she spoke of the salem. She could remember a time when the two communities were more distinct. She was unable to differentiate the two parcels of land now. She said that the lines have been blurred and now traditional believers were living amongst Christians. The original land was surrounding the church and as the number of Christians grew the salem expanded. Christianity has become fully integrated into the community; therefore the lines between Christians and traditional believers have become discrete.

A few years back the main road from Kumasi to Accra was built and the community of Bompata had the opportunity to move. Most town members chose not to relocate because of the chapel, which was a key symbol in their community. The community had constructed the chapel through communal labor. In traditional Akan society, voluntary communal labor is required of all members to complete public tasks. The construction of the chapel represented a partnership between the traditional leaders and the Christian community.

According to Olicia Oforiwaa, translated by Mama, “In the olden days when you offend your chiefs, if you commit a crime in the community, [...] [you] are to be killed or tortured, but they ran a secret refuge here in this town.” Oforiwaa recalls stories from her uncle who was the first minister in the whole of the Northern region. She remembers him, “saying that people run and sought refuge here. Because of that many people came to settle here because if you are a Christian you will not be killed or arrest because you have ran to Christ. So many people have freedom; otherwise they would have been

killed. So because of that people accepted Christ and they settled here in the community. [...] The people have built their houses here and now the town has expanded.” The town of Bompata turned into a refuge for villagers fleeing the traditional ruling system. Christianity embraced these villagers and incorporated them into their society. This resulted not only in an expansion of the population of Bompata, but an increase in the practicing members of the Presbyterian Church. In order to receive shelter and protection the refugees had to accept the Christian teachings.

### Education

Bompata Presbyterian Secondary School was started in 1893 and was attended by 6 students. The church and school started simultaneously (Frempong 12). The Reverend Ramseyer believed that in order for Christianity to be implanted in Bompata education would have to be established. He had the Reverend Boateng teach and preach in Bompata and sent Marin Donkor to assist later in 1893 (13). The students were taught how to read the bible which helped to facilitate the spread of the gospel. During the period of my interviews, almost all of my informants mentioned the educational opportunities that Christianity brought to the town. Education was always viewed in a positive light. Translated through Mama Twum-Barimah, Olicia Oforiwaa stated, “[...] When Christianity came they had schools so people are being trained and some are professionals.”

According to Papa Twum-Barimah in English, “Education in the whole of [the] Ashante [region] started in Bompata. The priest Ramseyer, because of the threat of attack, [...] the white man was invited and the school [...] [was] started. [As a result,] out of the 11 gods [...] as [I] know only 2 [are left] and they don’t perform [...] [much].

So education has [brought] in religion and religion has completely wiped out those other gods.” Papa believes that the through education Christianity was brought to Bompata. Through Christianity the lesser gods have been suppressed to the point that only two remain. The practices of African traditional religion have been forced underground.

Olicia Oforiwaa through Mama’s translation recalls an incident where her uncle sent a chief to school: “He was a big chief, a paramount chief, but this uncle sent that [...] [the chief] to school when he was a boy [...]. The royals were not allowed to go to school. [...] [and] to be king. When [...] [the Reverend] took the [...] [boy] to school the man’s uncle, who was then the chief, sent [...] [the Reverend] to court. [...] At that time, they didn’t have any recognition for education and they didn’t bother to go. [...] They [...] thought that when you went to school you would be caned and the royals are not to be touched or harmed. [...] So the court judged him and discharged him.” Mama Twum-Barimah informed me that the caning which took place in the school was referred to as Presbyterian discipline. When the missionaries came they brought corporal discipline which has remained in the Ghanaian school system. This story demonstrated the original resistance to education. This particular chief went on to get a professional degree from outside of Ghana. Bompata now has a history of educated chiefs. Emmanuel, a senior presbyter for over 17 years, recalls when the children were originally bribed with sugar to come to school. He stated that education was a foreign concept and people did not understand the importance of it at that time. The value of education has since been one of the aspects of the missionaries’ culture which Ghanaians have adopted and incorporated into their social system of values.

Papa Twum explains the role that the church now plays in the school. He stated, in English, “[...] The church has direct oversight over the school. [...] For some time now, they have been spending a lot of money to rehabilitate the schools [and] to purchase things that they need. The block [...] [for the building] was not good, so the church had to come in and help [...] [fix] it. [...] Then we bought jerseys for the [...] [students] for their sports. We bought football, soccer ball, and computer for them. These computer[s] we are fortunate to have some from Maryville College, which have come to augment what we have given to them. So now we are planning on enlarge[ing] the computer education to probably cover the whole community. Those who want to learn. So we are planning to buy a photo copier and a printer, so we will be able to raise significant funds to pay for the computer. [...] So that [we are] not always depend upon the church for money.”

The church now functions mainly as a financial supporter of the school. The curriculum now comes from the government of Ghana and standardized tests are administered. The school has a weekly chapel service and opens each morning with prayers. There is still a Christian presence throughout the school, but the focus is more academically based rather than strictly about the prosthelytization of the gospel.

Education was the main mode in which the gospel was transplanted in Bompata. Students of Bompata Presbyterian Secondary School were taught how to read and write which facilitated the reading of the Bible. The institution of the school allowed missionaries to socialize the members of the community into Christianity. The entity of the school was important in translating the gospel to the people of Bompata.

## Gender Roles

Women and men have come to serve different roles in the church. Gladys Baah states “We [women] help a lot in the church [...] cleaning at the chapel hall, the mission house and even at [...] [the] farm. The church has a farm. The women participate in all of these activities. We [do] weeding around the chapel. As for women’s fellowship [...] when somebody’s in need we gather some food stuffs and give them to that person.”

Margret Bempomaa states, “Women have a large responsibility all the work even the church building the surroundings and giving gifts it only the women that do that work.” Similar to women’s social roles outside of the church, the women are responsible for cleaning. I was clearly informed on several accounts that women are responsible for the cleaning of the chapel and the mission house. When I asked if the men helped, my informants either laughed or explained to me that cleaning was a women’s place.

Gladys Baah states, “As for the men, they also help when the women are not capable of doing certain work the men do it. Weeding at the farm, they do a lot [more] than the women. Planting of the cassava and stuff and preaching, and they help in the morning and on Sunday then too” According to Gladys Baah the men are responsible for the tasks that the women are unable to fulfill. These tasks are seen to be men’s work in society. These gender roles from traditional society have translated well into the church. Margret Bempomaa referred to the men’s week service when she stated, “you where in the church the other day so you heard. They are not playing their roles well because they are so busy; [...] but the women for fear of the lord, when they say [...] [they are so busy] they feel they have to go [to church] and do it to satisfy the lord.” Women are fulfilling the majority of the church duties because the men are not taking responsibility. With the

lack of men present women are given the opportunity to fulfill positions in the church that were previously relegated to men. These positions include session, leadership of small groups, and singing band.

Men's week was conducted on the week of June 25, 2009 to address the issue of men not carrying out their positions in the Presbyterian Church. In attendance there were 37 people: 12 men, 20 women, 3 girls, and 2 boys. Of the 12 men present, 3 were the pastors and lay ministers leading the service. At the service questions were posed and the congregation was given the opportunity to respond. Ernest, the Twum-Barimah's second oldest son, translated the service to me. The first question, "Why is the men's ministry not strong?" received answers such as, "They don't function well in the church." "They don't have a sense of commitment, so they make excuses." "They are too lazy." The general consensus seemed to state that men did not attempt to play an active role in the church community. The next question acknowledged that women play a more active role, but why were the men unable to organize themselves. One answer stated, "Men were too tired." This was quickly refuted by one of the women, "Women work all day, but they make time for God. So the men don't have an excuse. Women organize programs that are interesting but men's programs are boring. People don't feel like coming, because it is not planned well." Mr. Shrebal, the session clerk, stated, "When you go to offices men hold the big positions. [...] It means they do very well. So when it comes to church, they use the excuse that they take care of their women, so they must work hard to make more money for them. Therefore, they leave the spiritual work to the women." Men traditionally have been the leaders of the community. It seems that men are still holding most leadership positions in the church but in all other facets of ministry

the men are absent. Church provides women with a place to have meaningful roles but they still feel subservient to men. Their place is in the kitchen and home and men are to be the main economic providers. “All of the people are supposed to look up to the men. “All [...] [the men] are doing is singing, but they are supposed to be the main leaders in the church.” The men are not fulfilling the role that exists for them. “Women come to church because their husbands are not at home. They come for companionship and to meet their friends.” For many women, the church provides a sense of social cohesion and belonging. “Women don’t have a role in society so they come to church.” One woman recognizes that the church provides women with opportunities that are not present in the community.

One man recalls a story where his wife traveled outside of the house and he was left responsible for the cooking and maintenance of the house. He came to realize how difficult the task was and stated, “If women are able to do all of these things and still come to church, that means the men are becoming useless.” Not only did the man perform a women’s duty, he was able to recognize the difficulty. It seems that gender roles are going to become more flexible as women become educated and begin to travel outside of the home.

Many are worried that the town is in trouble because the men are not fully participating in the life of the church. One woman begged, “Don’t blame the men. Talk them into coming because if you lose them you will lose everything.” Some women were afraid if the men were not brought back into the church families would be weakened. “If men can be the head of the house then they should translate that into the church.” If men are traditionally the heads of the social structure it is assumed that they would fulfill such

roles at church. The closing statement, “This is all because the devil is attacking us (the heads of the household). The heads are not taking responsibility. When the head of the snake is cut off the remaining is just a rope. So when the devil cuts off your head there is nothing left.” This was implying that the devil is keeping the men from attending and fully participating in the church. There was a desperate call at the end for the men to accept the responsibility and for the women to persuade their husbands to assume their responsibility as head of the household. In society, women are not of the same status as men. I experienced this with Frank. The men are addressed first and then the women. The status of women is slightly higher in the church. There are still social barriers in place for women within the society and within the church.

When I asked Gladys Baah if both men and women preach, she responded, “Yes, in our church women are allowed to preach morning devotions.” Although both men and women are allowed to preach I never saw a women preach during the Sunday service. Females were permitted to preach at Women’s Fellowship meetings and Morning Prayer circles. It seemed that women were in charge of most aspects of the church but they were not comfortable holding these positions. They wanted the men who traditionally are the heads of the households to also be the heads of the church. With the men absent the women are given the opportunity to assume positions outside of the home. Church provides the women with a social sphere outside of the home. Women are beginning to hold positions in the community such as teaching at the local schools and holding government positions in the local government. Mama Twum-Barimah is the headmistress of the local school and in charge of several younger male teachers. In the



house Mama was in charge of the kitchen, but Papa was responsible for all other aspects. There were clear gender roles present.

The men seem to hold most of the high leadership positions in the Presbyterian Church but the church is open to the leadership of women. There are both men and women serving on the church session. While the roles are open to women, they seem more hesitant to assume them. I am unaware of the traditional roles that were open to women and have little research on how gender roles have changed since the introduction of Christianity on the town. Therefore, I am unable to make any comments on how gender roles have or have not been inculturated. The evolution of gender roles in Bompata society is a question for further research.

### Conclusion

I found that themes began to arise while interviewing and observing such as healing, witchcraft, curses, and defense against evil spirits. It became clear that Christianity has been used in place of traditional practices for protection against the spiritual world through similar logic. In the United States we have a sense of impermeable selves, but in Bompata beings were permeable. When praying each night the Twum-Barimahs would call upon God to protect us and keep us through the night. We would pray against any plans of the devil, specifically against any spirits entering into us while we were sleeping. Before we traveled from one location to another we prayed for a safe journey and against any plans of the devil to harm us. When we arrived safely we thanked God for his protection. Travel in Ghana is dangerous and a safe return is not guaranteed, therefore God is called upon to help with the uncertainty and anxiety.

Prayer serves as a source of protection. Most tragedies and some illnesses are attributed to the devil; therefore one must ask Jesus Christ for protection.

The African Christian is still influenced by African Traditional Religion, yet people are quick to distinguish themselves from traditional practices. Despite the fact that Bompata Christians are quick to deny any influence of African Traditional Religion, it was evident to me as the observer to see the influence of African culture on their Christian practices. Christianity was not initially inculturated. Christians were moved to the Salem which was a segregated living community. The Christians were taught the importance of living as followers of Jesus Christ which meant giving up many traditional practices because they conflicted with the teachings of Jesus Christ. Throughout the years many traditional practices have been incorporated into the religious tradition. The concept of evil is defined in terms of the devil but is still understood in the African culture as witchcraft. Healing is another important point which was originally the role of traditional priests and healers. This role in Bompata is now filled by the Reverend Twum-Barimah. Chiefs, Muslims, and other community members come to Papa for prayers. Although prayer has been adapted as a Christian practice many of the prayers such as deliverance prayers are derived from traditional African concepts which have been developed Christian forms.

With the absence of the chief, who is currently residing outside the township, Papa Twum-Barimah has come to fulfill some of the chief's roles. The traditional ruler, typically, mediates feuds within families and helps to mediate conflict amongst community members. Papa has become one of the key leaders in the community; therefore his respected status allows his decisions to carry weight in the community.

While I was residing in the Mission house there was at least one family feud settled by the Reverend.

The mystical language of the Christian scripture has aligned well with the worldview of the Bompata Christians. The passages that many Christians take as allegorical can easily be understood literally in the village of Bompata. It is very important for the people of Bompata to demonstrate a pure form of Christianity (especially to their white sister). A pure form of Christianity, however, does not exist because culture is always embedded in religion. The pure form of Christianity the people of Bompata were referring to was the Western Christianity brought by the missionaries. I found it unnecessary that cultural traditions were abandoned due to the fact that they did not appear to be in alignment with the “pure” form of Christianity handed down. Bompata has a unique history in that from the onset Ghanaians have been preaching the gospel, but this did not completely allow for the gospel to be inculturated. The first preachers were still educated and instructed by foreigners who did not completely understand and embrace the culture. Vestiges of African Traditional Religion are still present because African Religion and culture are so tightly interwoven, but many traditions have been abandoned because they are seen as pagan. Even though many interviewees quickly denied the presence of “pagan” practices; these practices have still influenced African Christian worldview and worship experience. The European missionaries were unable to recognize that their religion was imbedded into their distinctive culture; therefore they were unable to accommodate such practices as libation and ancestral worship. These practices were never given the opportunity to be in dialogue with Christianity.

Bompata Christians do not recognize healing, evil spirits, and those practices as aspects of their traditional religion being expressed in Christian language and imagery. There was originally little dialogue between traditional African culture and Christianity. The segregation of Christians into settlements further prevented any dialogue from developing. At the point in history that I have been researching, some aspects of traditional religion were never given the opportunity to be inculturated. They were strongly labeled as "heathen" and have remained that way in the eyes of Bompata Christians. Other elements of African culture were given the opportunity to be in dialogue with Christianity.



## APPENDIX





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Division of Social Sciences

**Principal Researcher:** Nicole Cashen  
**Faculty Supervisor:** Brian Pennington  
**Division:** Humanities  
**Title:** "The Enculturation of Religion in the Ghanaian Context"  
**Protocol#** 070509-13  
**Approval Status:** Approved pending requested change

May 13, 2009

Dear Nicole:

The Maryville College Institutional Review Board (IRB) has carefully considered your proposal referenced above. The proposed procedures afford reasonable protection to the human participants involved and therefore you are granted approval for the study pending a minor correction of your human participant consent form. The consent form should also include your own name and signature.

Your study is approved pending this change; you need not re-submit it to the IRB. Please also note that you should only interview participants over age 18. Your approval is effective May 13, 2009 and will expire one year from this date. Approval is contingent upon your agreement to obtain informed consent from your participants, to abide by the protocol summarized in the approved IRB application, and to keep appropriate records concerning your participants.

You are required to submit to the Maryville College IRB for review any changes in procedures involving human participants prior to the implementation of such changes.

If you have any questions concerning this approval or regulations governing human participant activities, please contact me at 865-981-8129 or [tricia.bruce@maryvillecollege.edu](mailto:tricia.bruce@maryvillecollege.edu). Best wishes with this fascinating study.

Sincerely,

Dr. Tricia C. Bruce  
Maryville College Institutional Review Board



**MARYVILLE COLLEGE**  
**Human Participants Research Proposal Form**

**Principal researcher(s):** Nicole Cashen

**Faculty sponsor (if applicable):** Brian Pennington

**Division:** Religion

**Mailing address of the principal researcher:** Box 2196

**Title of proposed research:** The Enculturation of Religion in the Ghanaian Context

**Proposed starting date:** May 20, 2009

**Ending date:** July 30, 2009

**Purpose and objectives of proposed research:** (attachments as necessary)

The purpose of this study is to better understand how Christianity has been enculturated into the Ghanaian culture.

**Participants:**

The individuals being interviewed will be volunteers from the Presbyterian Church in Bompata, Ghana. Bompata is located in the Ashanti region which is about an hour outside of the largest city Kumasi. The number of participants will be approximately 50.

**Methods and procedures:**

Field research as well as personal interviews will be conducted in Bompata, Ghana. For several Sundays I will observe church services and conduct interviews with church members and the clergy of the congregation (See Appendix A).

The interviews will be recorded and then transcribed with the help of a field assistant. Once the transcription has taken place the recording will be destroyed. The interviews should take about 45 minutes to an hour. The participant has the option to stop the interview at any time or can choose not to answer particular questions. When needed translation from Twi to English will be provided.

The identity of the participant will remain anonymous unless permission is given. There is no perceived risk to the participant in this study. No payment or coercion will be provided to the participant. The research conducted will be shared with the community upon completion.

The consent will be preformed orally as appropriate to the cultural context. Not all members of the congregation can read English and very few members are able to read their vernacular language; therefore I will read the consent form aloud in the appropriate language to ensure the participant understands their rights.

Principal  
Researcher

Nicole Cashen  
Signature

Faculty  
Supervisor

B. K. Penner  
Signature

Committee Approval

Trini Bruce  
Signature

Date

5-13-09

## Appendix A

Questions of similar caliber will be asked orally to the participant. They have the option of not answering any of the following questions. In some instances, the interview will be translated from Twi to English. The oral consent form will be presented in the language with which the participant is most comfortable. The interview process should take about 45 minutes to an hour and does not have any foreseen risks to the participant. The interview will be recorded and then transcribed. Once the transcription has taken place the recordings will be destroyed. The participant will not be identified, unless permission has been granted. The questions will be asked of the congregation as well as the clergy.

What role does the church play in your community?

What is the significance of the festival or ritual?

Does worshipping in Twi versus English effect the worship experience?

What practices differ here in Bompata from practices in the West?

How has the influence of the west affected your personal worship experience?

How has African Traditional Religion affected your worship style?

What role does scripture play in the church?

What does the Bible mean to you?

Who was Jesus Christ?

What role does the church play in your life?

Dear Participant,

I am a student at Maryville College and am conducting research on the enculturation of religion.

I voluntarily ask your permission to participation in one or more interviews. The interview will contain a series of oral questions, which you have the option to answer or discontinue the interview at any time. There are no risks associated with participation in this interview process.

The results of my research will be used in my Senior Thesis. Your name will not be disclosed without your permission.

The interview will be recorded, with your permission, to ensure that your words are accurately represented. If you give your consent for the recording to take place you have the right to discontinue the tape-recording at any point. A transcript of the interview will be created and the recording will be destroyed.

If there are questions concerning the research study feel free to contact me at (727) 534-7583 or my advisor Dr. Pennington at (865) 981- 8254. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the head of the Chair of the Human Participants Institutional Review Board Professor, Chad Schrock. He can be reached at (865) 981-6788.

I orally consent that I have heard and agree to the purposes and procedures of the research and understand my rights as a participant.

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



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